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The Little Misery

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

Robert W. Chambers

If you be dead also and are come hither to join us, I pity your lot, for you will be stunned with the noise of the dwarfs and the storks. VATHEK.

I

THERE was a river-driver beyond the Northwest Carry who respected neither moose nor man. Because he was the best river-driver on the West Branch they let him alone until he struck an Indian with a pick-pole.

The Indian's head was damaged, and while he waited for it to heal, he selected his revenge. His revenge was simple and effective. He hunted up the moose-warden and told many lies. Deftly concealed among these lies, however, was a truth that infuriated the warden.

The river-driver, whose name was Skeene, sat on his haunches and sneered when the moose-warden glided into camp. But when he dug out a head and antlers behind a shanty, Skeene picked up his rifle, looked obliquely at the moose-warden, tied his blanket and fry-pan, hoisted his canoe onto his head, and walked away to the southward, still sneering. I don't know what they said about it in Foxcroft, but Hale, who owned the timber, and who thought he owned Skeene, hunted him up and sent him to work on the new cut-off, hoping the affair might blow over in time for Skeene to drive logs again. But Skeene turned lazy and lined the dead water with traps and set-lines, and when Hale remonstrated, Skeene laughed. Then Hale threatened him and hinted about moose-wardens, and $500 fines, but Skeene thrashed Hale before the whole camp, packed his kit and canoe, and paddled serenely away down the West Branch.

That really began the trouble, for Hale never forgave him. When Skeene started to guide for Henderson on the upper Portage, Hale heard of it and ran him out. That, of course, marked him among the guides in the lake-country, and Skeene perhaps felt the ostracism, for he quietly went to work for Colby on the new sluice that ran from the carry-pond to the lake.

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Possibly, if they had let him alone, he might have turned out as tame as a moose-bird,—he was only twenty-three,—but Hale remembered, and the Indian remembered, and one day a man came in to the Carry Camp with a .44 bullet in his wrist and an unserved warrant in his pocket. The man was a moose-warden, and the warrant was for Skeene.

When the news spread that Skeene had shot a warden, the guides from Portage to Lily Bay condemned him. Down at Greenville a sheriff and posse boarded the *Katahdin*, and spent several weeks cruising about at public expense. The lake steamboat was comfortable, the food good, and the sheriff and posse were in no hurry to quit. Possibly they expected Skeene to come down to the shore and sit on the rocks; perhaps they fancied he might paddle across their bows in his sleep. Naturally, he did neither. When at length somebody suggested that the sheriff and posse take to their canoes, that official steamed back to the foot of the lake in a huff, and presently the rumours of Skeene's misdoings became scarcely more definite than camp-fire gossip.

Perhaps even then, if they had given him a chance, he might have surrendered and taken his punishment, but they didn't give him the chance. A warden saw him building a lean-to, on the island that divides the West Branch. The warden waited until dark, crawled in outside the fire, and caught Skeene asleep. That is all the warden recollects, merely that he caught Skeene asleep. What Skeene did to the warden when he awoke, the official cannot remember distinctly.

Three weeks after that, Skeene walked into Kineo store, handling his rifle in a most alarming fashion. He suggested that they place certain provisions and ammunition in his canoe, which lay on the beach below. The three clerks complied with an enthusiasm born of fright. Twenty minutes later Skeene, in his canoe, was seen making for Moose River. Two guides, just from Lily Bay, refused to fire at him, arguing it was not right to drown a man for stealing pork and powder. The hotel had not yet opened, and the people at the annex objected to a man-hunting trip, so they only notified the sheriff again and secretly wished Skeene in hell.

Of course, at the hotels they denied the very existence of Skeene; but the Bangor *News* printed the story, and people fought shy of Moose River and the lake beyond which is called Red Lake. In vain the guides declared the region safe. It was safe so far as they were concerned. It is not the nature of a guide—that is, a white guide—to inform on or interfere with any man. Skeene let them alone. The Indians, too, paddled about Red Lake when they wanted to. The Indian log-driver, however, stayed away after Skeene had shot a hole in his canoe. The canoe being bark, it was through Providence and a patch of gum that the log-driving half-breed ever paddled out of the mouth of Moose River.

Now if they had not started to hunt Skeene from the Lakes, he would never have troubled anybody, except possibly Hale and the half-breed. He went to Canada for a year, worked at anything that came along, and sent money to Kineo store to pay for his pork and powder That, of course, won him the guides again. So when home-sickness drove him back to Red Lake, he expected to be let alone. Hale, sluicing at the Northwest Carry, heard he had returned, and started for Red Lake with the log-driving half-breed and six men. Two days later they returned; Hale had a bullet in his leg above the knee and the half-breed carried a similar gift in his forearm.

This incident, while relieving the conversational monotony at camp and landing, bothered the sheriff cruelly. He went to Foxcroft, where they said unpleasant things to him; he went back to the Landing, and they made fun of him.

There was a captain on the lake named Snow,—a white-bearded, mild-eyed giant. When the local paper wanted an item it filled in with, "Extraordinary weather on the Lake in July! Steamboat *Red-Deer* in port with six feet two inches of Snow in her pilot house!"

The sheriff went to see Snow, and, after a long confab, summoned his posse, boarded the *Red-Deer*, and left Greenville, as the local paper expressed it, "under sealed orders, bound for Moose River." Naturally, half a dozen canoes were aboard, some lying bottom upward on the superstructure, some lashed to the rail. The posse carried Winchesters, although no game was in season.

Off the Grey Gull, an island, the little steamboat slowed down and stopped, the canoes were hoisted over the rail and dropped; the posse embarked. The sheriff said good-bye in a voice made loud by nervousness, and the *Red-Deer* swung about and steamed back to the foot of the lake with six feet two inches of Snow in her pilot-house.

At the mouth of Moose River two more canoes were waiting; Hale sat in one, paddle glistening in the pale spring sunshine; in the other sat the Indian log-driver, nursing the hammer of a rifle.

Below the long ridge the water is nearly dead, although a canoe might drift to the point in twenty-four hours. It was paddling for a mile to the first wing-dam, and there, the sheriff, who led, flung his stern-paddle into the bottom of the canoe, flourished the setting-pole, and stood up. At the same moment a jet of flame leaped from the edge of the wing-dam and a bullet passed through the sheriff's hat. The amazed official promptly fell overboard, sank, rose, grasped the edge of the canoe, and swamped it, turning the bow-paddler into the river. The swift current landed them on a shoal before the sheriff could shriek more than twice, and they crawled up on a rock, sleek and wet as half drowned flies in a sap-pan.

The other canoes had halted; some of the posse waved their rifles, but nobody fired at the wing-dam except Hale. He banged away as fast as he could pump the breach-lever, and Billy Sebato, the Indian, took to the bushes and lay patiently waiting for a mark, purring with eagerness.

"Jim Skeene, you darned thief!" shouted Hale, "come out from them stones! Jest you come out on to that there wing-dam once!"

Above the rush and gurgle of the river they heard Skeene's voice: "You let me be, or I'll shoot to kill!"

"Thief! Thief!" yelled Hale, dancing in his seat with anger, until the canoe heeled and almost swamped.

"I ain't no more thief than you be, Josh Hale!" bawled Skeene, "I paid for them rations and ca'tridges, and you know damn well I did!" Before he could add anything, the Indian, Sebato, fired twice.

"If that nigger Sebato don't quit shootin' I'll let loose on all o' ye!" called Skeene, shaking his rifle above the wing-dam edge. "Git back to your dreen, Josh Hale, I tell you."

Hale had reloaded his magazine, and now, swinging his setting-pole with one hand, started to push his canoe among the rocks where he could hold it and fire under cover. Skeene evidently saw him, for he slid suddenly to the corner of the wing-dam and fired three shots through the canoe, cutting a swale lengthwise at the water's edge.

"Oh, you sneaky bob-cat!" yelled Hale, white with rage. In another moment he was working cup and sponge to bail his canoe, which swung away on the current and drifted broadside across the sand-bar below, where it settled in two feet of limpid water.

"Now'll you let me be?" called Skeene. "I hain't done nothin' to you. If that there moose-warden wants me, let him come and get me. Ain't you ashamed to go huntin' a man like a lucivee? I tell ye, I'll shoot to kill, b' God I will, at the next man that fires!"

"You dasn't," shouted the sheriff from behind his rock; "you ain't half a man, Jim Skeene!"

"I be," said Skeene calmly, "but I don't want no fuss. You keep off'n this river, and you keep off'n this here wing-dam. And you stop sneakin' along the woods there, Billy Sebato! Git back there! Git back, or I'll shoot to kill!"

"You'll hang if you do!" bawled the sheriff.

"Then tell that nigger Indian to git back! Tell him quick! I see him—I——"

Sebato's rifle cracked, and the shot was repeated by Hale, wading out on the shoal. Then a forked flame flashed from the wing-dam, there came a crash and crackle of dry twigs, and the Indian pitched heavily over the bank into the swirling river.

The echoes of the shots died out among the trees; for a minute the gurgle of the river ripple alone troubled the stillness. A king-fisher wheeled up-stream, the sun flashing on his blue wings; a fish soused in a calm pool below the dam. Presently the changed voice of the sheriff broke the silence:

"Jim Skeene, God help you, you'll swing for this."

Skeene's pale face appeared above the dam, but nobody shot at him.

"You drove me to it," said Skeene. He spoke huskily. "I told him to git back,—I warned him to quit sneakin' up on me."

"Come down off'n that wing-dam," commanded Hale.

"Not for you, Josh Hale," replied Skeene, "nor not for any man o' ye! An' I won't be took neither. I'm goin' away to live quiet if they let me."

He crouched and watched them as they pushed their canoes out into the main channel. The sheriff and Hale advanced to the pool where Sebato lay. A slender fillet of blood, a mere thread hung in the water just below the surface, and stretched out, following the current, floating like a red string.

"Bring them settin'-poles," said the sheriff soberly, "paddles won't stand the

heft, an' he's hefty." Hale suddenly turned, snarling at the wing-dam; "Jim Skeene, you sneakin' muskrat!—" he said; but Skeene was gone when Hale's bullet stung the rock above.

II

They gave Skeene little peace for two months. Week after week a string of canoes passed the swift water under the first and second wing-dams, poled to the point-trail, and, disembarking a file of riflemen, poled on again to the discharge at Red Lake. Week after week the distant flash of a paddle startled the deer at sunrise among the lily-pads. At evening, too, silent canoes stealing through the sedge-grass roused the great blue herons from their heavenward contemplation and sent the sheldrake scuttling and splashing across shoal water with a noise like a churning twinscrew.

But they did not catch Skeene.

Once they saw him for a moment standing in the stern of his canoe. The canoe lay at the mouth of the Little Misery, that dead stretch of water and dead-fall, winding through the bog to the southward. They gave chase, trailing Skeene's canoe by the wake bubbles until they ran plump into quick water. But the Little Misery is a strange stream draining a strange land, and there, in that maze of cuts and channels, of "logans" and quick water, of swamp, shoal, sedge, and spectral ranks of dead trees, towering above swale and deadwood, they stood no more chance of flushing Skeene than a caribou has of raising three fawns in a season.

What he did with his canoe nobody might know. Certainly he left the main channel. Did he himself hide in the bog or dead-falls? Where do young sand-pipers vanish on a shingle beach? Oh, there were sounds in the swamp as the sheriff's posse steered through the even with silent paddle,—sounds that stir only in lonely places, faint splashes, a sound of a swirl in still water, the breeze in the swale-grass.

And so they hunted Skeene at twilight, at dusk of morning, at high noon, from the Northeast Carry to the Northwest Carry, from the West-Branch to Seboomook, from Portage to Lily Bay, and through a hundred miles of lake and stream, up and down, up and down. But Moose River bore no tales on its placid breast, and the wing-dams towered silent as twin Sphinxes, and the sounds that startled the silence where the Little Misery coils through the strange country, are mysteries even to those who interpret them.

It was in May that the ice went out, in company with Skeene; it was in July that they felt the bite of his bullets below the wing-dam; it was in August that they gave up the chase.

That evening, Skeene stood on a windfall in the depths of the Little Misery and watched three canoes file out of the discharge and glide into the swift water of Moose River. The next morning he started a lean-to on the ridge back of the Little Misery, and the sharp crack and thwack of his axe rang out over Red Lake. At sunrise a moose-cow heard it and ploughed hastily shoreward through the lily-pads with an ouf! woof! ouf! as she struck the pebbles on the beach. One by one the great blue herons flapped up from the dead pines, circled, sailed, and turned over to pitch head downwards into the sedge with dull cries.

At noon the echoes of axe-strokes died away and the hut was thatched with balsam, blue side skyward. By three o'clock a spike buck, a yearling, lay across a log on the ridge, and at four o'clock Skeene had satisfied his hunger.

He sat on the shore under the ridge, pensively picking his white teeth with the enjoyment of the abandoned. Across the lake the mountains turned to sapphire and ashes; a pale sky deepened into flame colour; the sun hung a globe of crimson in gilded mist.

One by one the last sunbeams reddened the trunks of the trees to the eastward, the foliage burned, the shore line glimmered. Like changing hues on a bubble, the colours deepened, and played over the placid lake. A single snowy bank of cloud, piled up in the east, glowed where the sun stained its edges. The midges danced above the sedge; the lake-wash rocked the swales, to and fro, to and fro. A trout broke in shallow water, flapped up and splashed again, and the red sky crimsoned the widening rings, spreading slowly shoreward.

In the days that followed, Skeene learned to talk to himself. When he did this he forgot that he had killed Sebato; after a while he forgot it altogether.

When the August afternoons were ablaze with brazen sunlight and the lake glistened like a sheet of steel, Skeene sprawled on a log in the shade and watched the great blue herons. When they "drove stakes" he mocked them with the same note until they answered "Ke-whack! Ke-whack! Ke-

whack!" The red squirrel's thin treble he imitated; he called the chipmunks with a tsip! tsip! and laughed until his white teeth glistened when a carrion-jay alighted on his knee for a shin-joint half hacked. The great belted-kingfishers knew him, the sheldrake, stringing along the creek at evening, turned their bright eyes to his, the osprey who lived above the ledge, wheeled above him for hours, knowing that he also was a savage thing and hunted when hungry.

He was hungry several times between sunrise and sunset. The swift water of the Little Misery gave him a trout to every set-line; the deeper pools by the sedge gave him pleasure.

On the Little Misery deer swarm at evening, and he had meat for the price of a cartridge.

The white nights of August brought that vague unrest that all forest creatures feel. The deer girdled the roots of the ash-trees and the spike bucks grew bolder; the great blue herons danced their contre-dance, evening after evening, at first solemnly, advancing, retreating in stately quadrilles, lifting their slim shins high in the sedge; but, as the month ended, the contre-dance lost dignity and gained in abandon, until the lone loon out on the lake shook the silence with his demon's laughter. As the moon waned, the forest world stirred; its attitude was expectant; it waited. The cow-moose began to cast evil, oblique glances on her calves, now turned darker; and the little bull-moose calf frisked until his tiny bell swung like the wattle on a turkey.

An impatience, almost a sadness fell upon Skeene. And with sadness came fear. He covered his lean-to and built a smoke-hole through which blue haze rose in the calm morning air. But, like wild things in winter, he was wary, and the steam-hole of a beaver's house might be more easily located than the chimney of Skeene's hut.

When September came a hush fell over the forest; land and water were silent; the trout no longer broke water or leaped full-length in the after-glow; the deer picked a silent path along the shore; the herons stood all day, heads stretched heavenward; the loon's maniac laughter was stilled. Silent and more silent the woods grew as the new moon, a faint tracery above the hills, rose in the evening sky. At its first quarter the silence deepened, at its half, the stillness was intense. Then one black night the Full Moon of September flashed in the sky, and before the last shore ripple had caught its glitter, a gigantic black shadow waded out into the lake and a roar shook the hills.

The first bull-moose had bellowed, and the rutting season had begun.

Instantly the forest, the lake, the shore, the stream, were alive; the meat-birds cried from every cedar; the deer barked from the sedge; a lynx howled and miauled in the second growth. Everywhere plumage and fur were growing glossy and gay. Even Skeene sewed porcupine quills into his boot-moccasins, and sang fragments of a song he had heard in Quebec.

III

Now, there is a season for all things; in the fall the black moose grows blacker and sleeker; in the fall the red buck rubs the tattered velvet from every prong; in the spring the mewing cat-bird whistles dreamily as a spotted thrush; in the spring the snowbird changes its feathers, chameleon-like, as the snow drifts or melts; and the dry chirring of the red squirrel grows sweeter.

"Each after its kind," says the quaint Book, and so the spruce-grouse drums in the long summer days, and the crested wood-duck ruffles its rainbow plumes, and the painted trout hang over the gravel beds in September, and the antlered moose barks at the September moon.

As for Skeene, he sewed porcupine quills in a semi-circle over the instep of his moccasins, laced a string of scarlet trout-flies across his slouch hat, and listened to the bull-moose, bellowing out on the moonlit ridge.

At times he sang his Quebec song, at times he sighed. Twice he spared a yearling buck—he could not tell why. He caught a big red sable, bigger than the coon-cat at the Carry House. It scratched and bit him, but he was very good to it. A lazy beaver, driven from the colony by his industrious relatives, bored a hole in the bank under Skeene's shanty. Beaver-tail and hindquarters are good, cold boiled, but Skeene let him live in peace and even piled enough poplar saplings at his door to last any lazy beaver a year. And all this time he was sorry he killed Sebato at the wing-dam; he wished he had shot him a year before in the bog-country—it was a good chance and nobody would have been the wiser.

When the September moon waxed full and the water lapped softly along the lake ledge, Skeene's heart grew full, and the

blood in his neck and cheeks ebbed and surged like moon-tides. So, on the second night, he took his rifle and dragged the canoe to the beach. But his heart failed him and he feared the Carry House, and he went back to his camp and rolled and grunted through a sleepless night. On the third evening he started on foot, but he hesitated when the lamp in the Carry House broke out, a red beam in the night. He stood, wretched, wistful, undecided, fingering his rifle butt, and his heart beat to suffocation. Something near him stirred and moaned among the rocks,—a miserable gluttonous fisher-cat, its head bristling with porcupine quills. And Skeene, sick with self-compassion, trailed the wounded creature to the water's edge and killed it,—pitying it as he pitied himself. Then, worn out with the fever in his veins, he slept openly where he lay, wondering if he should wake on Red Lake shore or on the shores of a redder lake.

On the fourth night of the full of the moon, he went swiftly across the ridge, unarmed, and the miles of woodland and shore sped away like mist, so eagerly he ran. On that night he heard the moose-cows calling the barking bull, and the whoof! of the dun doe in the sedge. Far on the shore the red beam of the Carry lamp signalled him, and his blood flamed the answer in his face. And, as he strode up to the house, he saw a woman on the shore looking out into the night across the spectral lake. It was Lois, servant at South Carry. He had danced with her two years ago at Foxcroft Landing, he had sent her six otter pelts a month before he shot Sebato.

She was the girl he had come for.

Is it possible she expected him? The restlessness of September had drawn her to the lake and something had led him to her.

The moon, a silver lamp, traced a shining trail across the shadowy waters; his canoe grated softly on the shoal, a string of bubbles followed the paddle sweep, the foam whispered secrets to the clustered sedge-grass.

And so, together, they glided away on a trail of silver water to the strange country, drained by strange streams, stirred by strange winds. The red spark of the Carry lamp died out in the night, the little grey stars twinkled over the dead waters, pale sparks from phantom nuptial torches flaring in the north.

At dawn the sky crimsoned the Little Misery. They slept. At sunrise a moose roared a salute to the coming day.

They awoke and kissed each other.

IV

When the public-spirited citizens of Foxcroft offered $500 reward for the capture of Skeene, Placide L'Hommedieu scratched his greasy chin, licked his lips, and went out to buy cartridges. Placide had trapped in the Province and thought he could trap as well in Maine.

"Monsieur L'Hommedieu, what will you do with $500?" asked the Mayor of Foxcroft.

"Le Hommydoo won't need it," observed a grizzled portage guide who had once shot a match with Skeene. And he was right, for they found L'Hommedieu a week later peacefully floating down Moose River in his canoe, with a bullet in his brain.

When Skeene paddled away with Lois, there was trouble in Foxcroft. Hale left sluice, drain, and chain, and wired the Sheriff at the Landing to meet him at Moosehead Inn. The Mayor went also, and next morning the reward was doubled for "James Skeene, Murderer, dead or alive."

Hale had never forgiven the blow at the cut-off, but a busy man would scarcely have left his sluice to hunt another man to death for that alone. No, Hale had other reasons, and they concerned neither Billy Sebato nor Placide L'Hommedieu. They concerned Lois, servant at South Carry; for when she left with Jim Skeene she took Hale's betrothal ring with her.

After Skeene had set Placide L'Hommedieu afloat, with mud on his face and a bullet in his skull, he shoved the canoe into swift water at Moose River, broke both paddles, splintered the setting-pole, and solemnly watched the canoe out of sight.

Lois, waiting for him when he poled into the Little Misery, looked at his knife in the scolloped leather sheath, then at his rifle, and finally into his sombre eyes.

"I heard,—only one shot. Was it a deer?"

He nodded, muttering that he had missed; but that night she caressed him, taking his curly head into her arms, and wept over him till daybreak crimsoned the world.

After that they were almost gay. He notched logs and built a hut and rammed moss into the cracks. Lois brought clay from the sweet water, and cut balsam until her little hands were stained to the palm. Twice he passed the three carrys to the

C. P. R. and hung to a freight as far as Sainte Croix. They knew nothing and cared less in the Dominion, and he bought salt and pork and flour and cartridges with the proceeds of Hale's ring. The third trip he walked on the C. P., fearing the train, and he got his price for ten pelts, including musk-rat.

They knew that happiness that is bred in haunting fear, that fierce, that intense love whose roots are imbedded in terror. Lois had been to school and these were the things she knew;—that two and two make four, that moose-calves are born in May, that bark peels best in June, that moose-calves are weaned in September. She knew also how to use Skeene's knife, and when he found beaver above swift water and told her so in the evening, she cut saplings and whittled trip-sticks and notched chokers while he hewed out the bed-pieces for the traps, and sharpened enough young ash to build the fences for winter traps. Mink traps, too, were no mystery to Lois, and they talked long and wisely concerning standards and cubbies and spindles, while the embers died under the simmering tins and the deer whistled on the windy ridge.

Snow came, a phantom flurry through the pale sunshine, and Skeene lugged more deer-hides into his hut. A hot week followed, sending the trout to the bottom-sands and the deer to the shallows; then came the ice; at first a brittle, glittering skin, encasing stem and reed, and wrinkling hidden stagnant pools. The wind in the grasses grew harsher, the reeds rattled at evening; vast flocks of little birds circled high in the sky for the winds of the South called them, and the geese were drifting overhead.

One day the snow came again, and at evening it had not ceased falling. A week later the lake froze and Skeene dragged his canoe into the hut and daubed it with white-lead, while Lois crept close to his side and strung snowshoes. At times she sang. He listened, lying beside the canoe. When she had sung the same song until evening he taught her the song he had learned in Quebec;

> "Mossieu Meenoose,
> Mossieu Meenoose,
> Mon dieu, que tu as
> Un villain chat là."

And she sang it and sewed scarlet braid across her moccasins.

During these weeks Hale was busy in Foxcroft. When the smaller lakes froze he leered sideways at the Sheriff and ordered a dozen pairs of snowshoes. Once or twice he went back to his sluice and cursed, but the river drivers regarded him with evil eyes, and the sluicers drove their props sullenly until he went away leaving a string of oaths in his wake. There were men of the stamp he wanted on the Province side of the C. P. R.; there was Achille Verdier, one-eyed and idle; there was greasy little Armand Fleury, dirtier for his fox-skin cap, dingier for the red braid on the tail. There also resided Wyombo, pigeon-toed, furtive, aboriginal. Much could be done with these gentleman and $1,000. The value of Hale's ring was $150; therefore the people of Foxcroft gossiped.

Snow fell on the frozen lake; the Little Misery was mantled, the carrys choked. All day long the meat-birds whined in the fir-trees and at night the sleet pelted the frozen snow. The deer yarded on the ridge, the moose on the slope above; the black bear buried his feeble nose in his stomach and dreamed, and the otters frisked over their slide. As for Lois, she was learning things; she learned that the fur on the belly of a young panther is wavy, she learned that men are brutes, and that Skeene was all the world to her; she learned that she also had her value, for she saw him swim the swift water of the Little Misery when she screamed affrighted by an impudent lynx. She learned that he sometimes preferred solitude to company, that he sometimes preferred sleep to caresses. She learned that he went hungry that she might eat, that he shivered while she slept under skin and blanket.

Sometimes they played together, Skeene and this slender girl, like young foxes in the snow. She would often hide, too, in the hollow of a great swamp-oak, and when he came home she would call: "Jim! Jim! find me!"

But God lives, and the world spins, and the hare turns white in winter, and the routine of the beginning and the end never varies.

And so it came about that Skeene, laughing up at Lois in the hollow swamp-oak, glanced over his shoulder and saw six black dots clustered upon the frozen lake to the southward. He said nothing, but looked into the north. There were more dots there, more also on the ice in the west. For a moment he thought the east was still open; after a while he heard the scrape of a snow-shoe very near. Lois also heard, and

her face was like death as she reached down and took the rifle from Skeene's hand.

When he had climbed up into the hollow tree beside her and looked out from the hole above the great branch, he saw Hale peering at him from a dead-fall.

"Come down," said Hale.

Skeene clapped his rifle to his cheek and fired.

"Come down," repeated Hale from behind his dead-fall. Lois, trembling at Skeene's feet, shrank at the sombre voice from the woods. Skeene bent and kissed her and caressed her, muttering things she could not understand, but she caught his hand in hers and tore off the fur mitten and pressed it to her hot lips, moaning and sobbing.

"Come down, for the last time, Jim Skeene," said Hale, slowly. Suddenly a rifle shot rang through the frozen forest. The hand that Lois held tightened against her lips, quivered, relaxed. Something outside fell clinking and clattering to the ground at the foot of the tree. It was Skeene's rifle; and Skeene sank forward, hanging half out of the hole in the tree, head downward, like a dead squirrel.

And beside him, the other wild thing sobbed and whimpered and moaned among the branches, while below the swift axes bit into the tree from which the dead game hung, head downward.

"Look in the hut for the woman!" bawled Hale.

The tree swayed and crackled and fell crashing into the snow.

"Where's that woman?" shouted Hale from the hut;—"G—d d—n her!"——

But when at last he found her he changed his mind and let her stay with Skeene there in the snow.

Zaida

By MULLAH ZUKKEE

Translated by Achmed Abdullah

[*Zukkee was a seventeenth-century Moslem priest, who founded in Kabul the esoteric Sufi lodge named after him, and expressed some of Nietzsche's philosophy two hundred years before the "Antichrist."*

The Comic Muse insists upon two words of cold fact before, and after, this outburst: the fair Zaida was the wife of an Uzbek nobleman from Tartary whom Mullah Zukkee killed; and, several years later, she had the passionate priest-poet put to death—thrown into a cauldron of boiling mutton-suet while he was overcome with Shirazi wine!

"Shiite" and "Sunnite" are of course the two main divisions of Moslems, the former upholding the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali, as the true line, while the orthodox Sunni maintain the holy succession of Abu Bekr, father of Mohammed's wife.]

IN EVERY city I seek thee, Zaida.
In every language I praise thee.
My heart beholds thee, the one.

As the true believer seeks the truth of Allah
From mosque to mosque,
So, unsuccessfully, do I seek the like of thy face
From bazaar to bazaar.

I care not if thou be Shiite or Sunnite.
For Heresy and Orthodoxy stand both behind
The screen of thy beauty.

Orthodoxy to the Orthodox!
Heresy to the Heretic!
But to me, being a wise mullah, the scent of thy body,
The touch of thy mouth that sucks the soul away.

The Tragedy of a Comic Song

By LEONARD MERRICK

I LIKE to monopolize a table in a restaurant, unless a friend is with me, so I resented the young man's presence. Besides, he had a melancholy face. If it hadn't been for the piano-organ, I don't suppose I should have spoken to him. As the organ that was afflicting Lisle Street began to volley a comic song of a day that was dead, he started.

"That tune!" he murmured in French. If I did not deceive myself, tears sprang to his eyes.

I was curious. Certainly, on both sides of the Channel, we had long ago had more than enough of the tune—no self-respecting organ-grinder rattled it now. That the young Frenchman should wince at the tune I understood. But that he should weep!

I smiled sympathetically. "We suffered from it over here as well," I remarked.

"I did not know," he said, in English that reproved my French, "it was sung in London also—'Partant pour le Moulin'?"

"Under another name," I told him, "it was an epidemic."

Clearly, the organ had stirred distressing memories in him, for though we fell to chatting, I could see that he neither talked nor dined with any relish. As luck would have it, too, the instrument of torture resumed its répertoire well within hearing, and when "Partant pour le Moulin" was reached again, he clasped his head.

"You find it so painful?" I inquired.

"Painful?" he exclaimed. "Monsieur, it is my 'istory, that comic tune! It is to me romance, tragedy, ruin. Will you hear? Wait! I shall range my ideas. Listen:

It is Paris, at Montmartre—we are before the door of a laundress. A girl approaches. Her gaze is troubled, she frowns a little. What ails her? I shall tell you: the laundress has refused to deliver her washing until her bill is paid. And the girl cannot pay it—not till Saturday—and she has need of things to put on. It is a moment of anxiety.

She opens the door. Some minutes pass. The girl reappears, holding under her arm a little parcel. Good! she had triumphed. In coming out she sees a young man, pale, abstracted, who stands before the shop. He does not attempt to enter. He stands motionless, regarding the window with an air forlorn.

"Ah," she says to herself, "here is another customer who cannot pay his bill!"

But wait a little. After 'alf an hour what happens? She sees the young man again! This time he stands before a modest restaurant. Does he go in? No, again no! He regards the window sorrowfully. He sighs. The dejection of his attitude would melt a stone.

"Poor boy," she thought; "he cannot pay for a dinner either!"

The affair is not finished. How the summer day is beautiful—she will do some footing! Figure yourself that once more she perceives the young man. Now it is before the mont-de-piété, the pawnbroker's. She watches him attentively. Here, at least, he will enter, she does not doubt. She is wrong. It is the same thing—he regards, he laments, he turns away!

"Oh, mon Dieu," she said. "Nothing remains to him to pawn even!"

It is too strong! She addressed him:

"Monsieur!"

But, when she has said "Monsieur," there is the question how she shall continue. Now the young man regards the girl instead of the pawnbroker's. Her features are pretty—or "pretty well"; her costume has been made by herself, but it is not bad; and she has chic—above all she has chic. He asks:

"What can I have the pleasure to do for you?"

Remark that she is bohemian, and he also. The conversation was like this:

"Monsieur, three times this morning I have seen you. It was impossible that I resist speaking. You have grief?"

"Frightful!" he said.

"Perhaps," she added timidly, "you have hunger also?"

"A hunger insupportable, mademoiselle!"

"I myself am extremely hard up, monsieur, but will you permit that I offer you what I can?"

"Angel!" the young man exclaimed. "There must be wings under your coat. But I beg of you not to fly yet. I shall tell you the reason of my grief. If you will do me the honour to seat yourself at the café opposite, we shall be able to talk more pleasantly."

This appeared strange enough, this invitation from a young man who she had supposed was starving; but wait a little! Her amazement increased when, to pay for the wine he had ordered, her companion threw on to the table a bank-note with a gesture absolutely careless.

She was in danger of distrusting her eyes.

"Is it a dream?" she cried. "Is it a vision from the *Thousand and One Nights*, or is it really a bank-note?"

"Mademoiselle, it is the mess of pottage," the young man answered gloomily. "It is the cause of my sadness: for that miserable money, and more that is to come, I have sold my birthright."

She was on a ship—no, what is it, your expression?—"at sea"!

"I am a poet," he explained; "but perhaps you may not know my work; I am not celebrated. I am Tricotrin, mademoiselle—Gustave Tricotrin, at your feet! For years I have written, aided by ambition, and an uncle who manufactures silk in Lyons. Well, the time is arrived when he is monstrous, this uncle. He says to me, 'Gustave, this cannot last—you make no living, you make nothing but debts. (My tragedies he ignores.) Either you must be a poet who makes money, or you must be a partner who makes silk.' How could I defy him?—he holds the purse. It was unavoidable that I stooped. He has given me a sum to satisfy my creditors, and Monday I depart for Lyons. In the meantime, I take tender farewells of the familiar scenes I shall perhaps never behold again."

"How I have been mistaken!" she exclaimed. And then: "But the hunger you confessed?"

"Of the soul, mademoiselle," said the poet—"the most bitter!"

"And you have no difficulties with the laundress?"

"None," he groaned. "But in the bright days of poverty that have fled forever, I have had many difficulties with her. This morning I reconstituted the situation—I imagined myself without a sou, and without a collar."

"The little restaurant," she questioned, "where I saw you dining on the odour?"

"I figured fondly to myself that I was ravenous and that I dared not enter. It was sublime."

"The mont-de-piété?"

"There imagination restored to me the vanished moments when I have mounted with suspense, and my least deplorable suit of clothes." His emotion was profound. "It is my youth to which I am bidding adieu!" he cried. "It is more than that— it is my aspirations and my renown!"

"But you have said that you have no renown," she reminded him.

"So much the more painful," said the young man; "the hussy we could not win is always the fairest—I part from renown even more despairingly than from youth."

She felt an amusement, an interest. But soon it was the turn of him to feel an interest—the interest that had consequences so important, so 'eart-breaking, so *fatales!* He had demanded of her, most naturally, her history, and this she related to him in a style dramatic. Myself, I have not the style dramatic, though I avow to you I admire that.

"We are in a provincial town," she said to the young man, "we are in Rouen—the workroom of a modiste. Have no embarrassment, monsieur Tricotrin: you, at least, are invisible to the girls who sew! They sew all day and talk little—already they are *tristes*, resigned. Among them sits one who is different—one passionate, ambitious—a girl who burns to be *divette*, singer, who is devoured by longings for applause, fashion, wealth. She has made the acquaintance of a little pastrycook. He has become fascinated, they are affianced. In a month she will be married."

The young man, Tricotrin, well understood that the girl she described was herself.

"What does she consider while she sits sewing?" she continued. "That the pastrycook loves her, that he is generous, that she will do her most to be to him a good wife? Not at all. Far from that! She considers, on the contrary, that she was a fool to

promise him; she considers how she shall escape—from him, from Rouen, from her ennui—she seeks to fly to Paris. Alas! she has no money, not a franc. And she sews—always she sews in the dull room—and her spirit rebels."

"Good!" said the poet. "It is a capital first instalment."

"The time goes on. There remains only a week to the marriage morning. The little home is prepared, the little pastrycook is full of joy. *Alors*, one evening they go out; for her the sole attraction in the town is the hall of varieties. Yes, it is third class, it is not great things; however, it is the only one in Rouen. He purchases two tickets. What a misfortune—it is the last temptation to her! They stroll back; she takes his arm—under the moon, under the stars; but she sees only the lamps of Paris!—she sees only that he can say nothing she cares to hear!"

"Ah, unhappy man!" murmured the poet.

"They sit at a café table, and he talks, the fiancé, of the bliss that is to come to them. She attends to not a word, not a syllable. While she smiles, she questions herself, frenzied, how she can escape. She has commanded a *sirop*. As she lifts her glass to the syphon, her gaze falls on the ring she wears—the ring of their betrothal. 'To the future, cher ange!' says the fiancé. 'To the future, vieux chéri!' she says. And she laughs in her heart—for she resolves to sell the ring!"

Tricotrin had become absolutely enthralled.

"She obtained for the ring forty-five francs the next day—and for the little pastrycook all is finished. She wrote him a letter—'Good-bye.' He has lost his reason. Mad with despair, he has flung himself before an electric car, and is killed. . . . It is strange," she added to the poet, who regarded her with consternation, "that I did not think sooner of the ring that was always on my finger, n'est-ce-pas? It may be that never before had I felt so furious an impulse to desert him. It may be also—that there was no ring and no pastrycook!" And she broke into peals of laughter.

"Ah, mon Dieu," exclaimed the young man, "but you are enchanting! Let us go to breakfast—you are the kindred soul I have looked for all my life. By-the-bye, I may as well know your name?"

Then, monsieur, this poor girl who had trembled before her laundress, she told him a name which was going, in a while, to crowd the Ambassadeurs and be famous through all Paris—a name which was to mean caprices, folly, extravagance the most wilful and reckless. She answered—and it said nothing yet— My name is Paulette Fleury."

The piano-organ stopped short, as if it knew the Frenchman had reached a crisis in his narrative. He folded his arms and nodded impressively.

"Voilà! Monsieur, I 'ave introduced you to Paulette Fleury! It was her beginning."

He offered me a cigarette, and frowned, lost in thought, at the lady who was chopping bread behind the counter.

"Listen," he resumed.

They have breakfasted; they have fed the sparrows around their chairs, and they have strolled under the green trees in the sunshine. She was singing then at a little café-concert the most obscure. It is arranged, before they part, that in the evening he shall go to applaud her.

He had a friend, young also, a composer, named Nicolas Pitou. I cannot express to you the devotion that existed between them. Pitou was employed at a publisher's, but the publisher paid him not much better than his art. The comrades have shared everything: the loans from the mont-de-piété, the attic, and the dreams. In Montmartre it was said "Tricotrin and Pitou" as one says "Orestes and Pylades." It is beautiful such affection, hein? Listen!

Tricotrin has recounted to his friend his meeting with Paulette, and when the hour for the concert is arrived, Pitou accompanied him. The musician, however, was, perhaps, the more sedate. He has gone with little expectation; his interest was not high.

What a surprize he has had! He has found her an actress—an artist to the ends of the fingers. Tricotrin was astonished also. The two friends, the poet and the composer, said "Mon Dieu!" They regarded the one the other. They said "Mon Dieu!" again. Soon Pitou has requested of Tricotrin an introduction. It is agreed. Tricotrin has presented his friend, and invited the *chanteuse* to drink a bock—a glass of beer. . . . A propos, you take a liqueur, monsieur, yes? What liqueur you take? Sst, garçon! . . . Well, you conjecture, no doubt, what I shall say? Before the bock was finished, they were in love with her—both!

At the door of her lodging, Paulette nas given to each a pressure of the hand, and said gently, "Till to-morrow."

"I worship her!" Tricotrin told Pitou.

"I have found my ideal!" Pitou answered Tricotrin.

It is superb, such friendship, hein?

In the mind of the poet who had accomplished tragedies majestic—in the mind of the composer, the most classical in Montmartre—there had been born a new ambition: it was to write a comic song for Paulette Fleury!

It appears to you droll, perhaps? Monsieur, to her lover, the humblest *divette* is more than Patti. In all the world there can be no joy so thrilling as to hear the music of one's brain sung by the woman one adores—unless it be to hear the woman one adores give forth one's verse. I believe it has been accepted as a fact, this; nevertheless it is true.

Yes, already the idea had come to them, and Paulette was well pleased when they told her of it. Oh, she knew they loved her, both, and with both she coquetted. But with their intention she did not coquet; as to that she was in earnest. Every day they discussed it with enthusiasm—they were to write a song that should make for her a furore.

What happened? I shall tell you. Monday, when Tricotrin was to depart for Lyons, he informed his uncle that he will not go. No less than that! His uncle was furious—I do not blame him—but naturally Tricotrin has argued. "If I am to create for Paulette her great chance, I must remain in Paris to study Paulette! I cannot create in an atmosphere of commerce. I require the Montmartrois, the boulevards, the inspiration of her presence." Isn't it?

And Pitou—whose very soul had been enraptured in his leisure by a fugue he was composing—Pitou would have no more of it. He allowed the fugue to grow dusty, while day and night he thought always of refrains that ran "*Zim-la-zim-la zim-boum-boum!*" Constantly they conferred, the comrades. They told the one the other how they loved her; and then they beat their heads, and besought of Providence a fine idea for the comic song.

It was their thought supreme. The silk manufacturer has washed his 'ands of Tricotrin, but he has not cared—there remained to him still one of the bank-notes. As for Pitou, who neglected everyting except to find his melody for Paulette, the publisher has given him the sack. Their acquaintances ridiculed the sacrifices made for her. But, monsieur, when a man loves truly, to make a sacrifice for the woman is to make a present to himself.

Nevertheless I avow to you that they fretted because of her coquetry. One hour it seemed that Pitou had gained her heart; the next her encouragement has been all to Tricotrin. Sometimes they have said to her:

"Paulette, it is true we are as Orestes and Pylades, but there can be only one King of Eden at the time. Is it Orestes, or Pylades that you mean to crown?"

Then she would laugh and reply:

"How can I say? I like you both so much I can never make up my mind which to like best."

It was not satisfactory.

And always she added. "In the meantime, where is the song?"

Ah, the song, that song, how they have sought it!—on the Butte, and in the Bois, and round the Halles. Often they have tramped Paris till daybreak, meditating the great chance for Paulette. And at last the poet has discovered it: for each verse a different phase of life, but through it all, the pursuit of gaiety, the fever of the dance—the gaiety of youth, the gaiety of dotage, the gaiety of despair! It should be the song of the pleasure-seekers—the voices of Paris when the lamps are lit.

Monsieur, if we sat 'ere in the restaurant until it closed, I could not describe to you how passionately Tricotrin, the devoted Tricotrin, worked for her. He has studied her without cease; he has studied her attitudes, her expressions. He has taken his lyric as if it were material and cut it to her figure; he has taken it as if it were plaster, and moulded it upon her mannerisms. There was not a *moue* that she made, not a pretty trick that she had, not a word that she liked to sing, for which he did not provide an opportunity. At the last line, when the pen fell from his fingers, he shouted to Pitou, "Comrade, be brave—I have won her!"

And Pitou? Monsieur, if we sat 'ere till they prepared the tables for déjeuner tomorrow, I could not describe to you how passionately Pitou, the devoted Pitou, worked that she might have a grand popularity by his music. At dawn, when he has found that *strepitoso* passage, which is the hurrying of the feet, he wakened the poet and cried, "Mon ami, I pity you—she is mine!" It was the souls of two men when it was finished, that comic song they made for her! It was the song the organ has ground out—"Partant pour le Moulin."

And then they rehearsed it, the three of them, over and over, inventing always new effects. And then the night for the song is arrived. It has rained all day, and they have walked together in the rain—the singer, and the men who loved her, both—to the little café-concert where she would appear.

They tremble in the room, among the crowd, Pitou and Tricotrin; they are agitated. There are others who sing—it says nothing to them. In the room, in the Future, there is only Paulette!

It is very hot in the café-concert, and there is too much noise. At last they ask her: "Is she nervous?" She shakes her head: "Mais non!" She smiles to them.

Attend! It is her turn. Ouf; but it is hot in the café-concert, and there is too much noise! She mounts the platform. The audience are careless; it continues, the jingle of the glasses, the hum of talk. She begins. Beneath the table Tricotrin has gripped the hand of Pitou.

Wait! Regard the crowd that look at her. The glasses are silent, now, hein? The talk has stopped. To a great actress is come her chance. There is *not* too much noise in the café-concert!

But, when she finished! What an uproar! Never will she forget it. A thousand times she has told the story, how it was written—the song—and how it made her famous. Before two weeks she was the attraction of the Ambassadeurs, and all Paris has raved of Paulette Fleury.

Tricotrin and Pitou were mad with joy. Certainly Paris did not rave of Pitou nor Tricotrin—there have not been many that remembered who wrote the song; and it earned no money for them, either, because it was hers—the gift of their love. Still, they were enraptured. To both of them she owed equally, and more than ever it was a question which would be the happy man.

Listen! When they are gone to call on her one afternoon she was not at 'ome. What had happened? I shall tell you. There was a noodle, rich—what you call a "Johnnie in the Stalls"—who became infatuated with her at the Ambassadeurs. He whistled "Partant pour le Moulin" all the days, and went to hear it all the nights. Well, she was not at 'ome because she had married him. Absolutely they were married! Her lovers have been told it at the door.

What a moment! Figure yourself what they have suffered, both! They had worshipped her, they had made sacrifices for her, they had created for her her grand success; and, as a consequence of that song she was the wife of the "Johnnie in the Stalls"!

Far down the street, but yet distinct, the organ revived the tune again. My Frenchman shuddered, and got up.

"I cannot support it," he murmured. "You understand? The associations are too pathetic."

"They must be harrowing," I said. "Before you go, there is one thing I should like to ask you, if I may. Have I had the honour of meeting monsieur Tricotrin, or monsieur Pitou?"

He stroked his hat, and gazed at me in sad surprize. "Ah, but neither, monsieur," he groaned. "The associations are much more 'arrowing than that—I was the 'Johnnie in the Stalls'!"

Infant Joy

By WILLIAM BLAKE

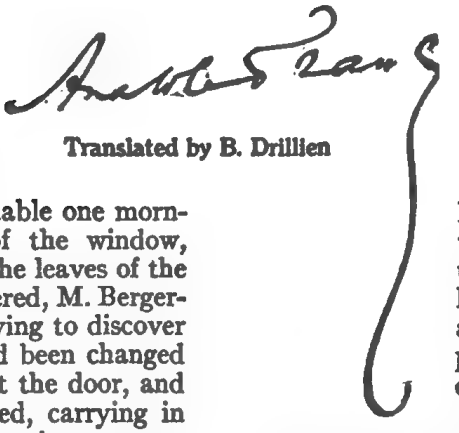
"I HAVE no name;
I am but two days old."
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name."
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy, but two days old.
Sweet joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while;
Sweet joy befall thee!

The Coming of Riquet

From "The Amethyst Ring"

By ANATOLE FRANCE



Translated by B. Drillien

SEATED at his table one morning in front of the window, against which the leaves of the plane tree quivered, M. Bergeret, who was trying to discover how the ships of Æneas had been changed into nymphs, heard a tap at the door, and forthwith his servant entered, carrying in front of her, opossum-like, a tiny creature whose black head peeped out from the folds of her apron, which she had turned up to form a pocket. With a look of anxiety and hope upon her face, she remained motionless for a moment, then she placed the little thing upon the carpet at her master's feet.

"What's that?" asked M. Bergeret.

It was a little dog of doubtful breed, having something of the terrier in him, and a well-set head, a short, smooth coat of a dark tan colour, and a tiny little stump of a tail. His body retained its puppy-like softness, and he went sniffling at the carpet.

"Angélique," said M. Bergeret, "take this animal back to its owner."

"It has no owner, Monsieur."

M. Bergeret looked silently at the little creature, who had come to examine his slippers, and was giving little sniffs of approval. M. Bergeret was a philologist, which perhaps explains why at this juncture he asked a vain question.

"What is he called?"

"Monsieur," replied Angélique, "he has no name."

M. Bergeret seemed put out at this answer: he looked at the dog sadly, with a disheartened air.

Then the little animal placed its two front paws on M. Bergeret's slipper, and, holding it thus, began innocently to nibble at it. With a sudden access of compassion M. Bergeret took the tiny nameless creature upon his knee. The dog looked at him intently, and M. Bergeret was pleased at his confiding expression.

"What beautiful eyes!" he cried.

The dog's eyes were indeed beautiful, the pupils of a golden-flecked chestnut set in warm white. And his gaze spoke of simple, mysterious thoughts, common alike to the thoughtful beasts and simple men of the earth.

Tired, perhaps, with the intellectual effort he had made for the purpose of entering into communication with a human being, he closed his beautiful eyes, and, yawning widely, revealed his pink mouth, his curled-up tongue, and his array of dazzling teeth.

M. Bergeret put his hand into the dog's mouth, and allowed him to lick it, at which old Angélique gave a smile of relief.

"A more affectionate little creature doesn't breathe," she said.

"The dog," said M. Bergeret, "is a religious animal. In his savage state he worships the moon and the lights that float upon the waters. These are his gods, to whom he appeals at night with long-drawn howls. In the domesticated state he seeks by his caresses to conciliate those powerful genii who dispense the good things of this world—to wit, men. He worships and honours men by the accomplishment of the rites passed down to him by his ancestors: he licks their hands, jumps against their legs, and when they show signs of anger towards him he approaches them crawling

on his belly as a sign of humility, to appease their wrath."

"All dogs are not the friends of man," remarked Angélique. "Some of them bite the hand that feeds them."

"Those are the ungodly, blasphemous dogs," returned M. Bergeret, "insensate creatures like Ajax, the son of Telamon, who wounded the hand of the golden Aphrodite. These sacrilegious creatures die a dreadful death, or lead wandering and miserable lives. They are not to be confounded with those dogs who, espousing the quarrel of their own particular god, wage war upon his enemy, the neighbouring god. They are heroes. Such, for example, is the dog of Lafolie, the butcher, who fixed his sharp teeth into the leg of the tramp Pied-d'Alouette. For it is a fact that dogs fight among themselves like men, and Turk, with his snub nose, serves his god Lafolie against the robber gods, in the same way that Israel helped Jehovah to destroy Chamos and Moloch."

The puppy, however, having decided that M. Bergeret's remarks were the reverse of interesting, curled up his feet and stretched out his head, ready to go to sleep upon the knees that harboured him.

"Where did you find him?" asked M. Bergeret.

"Well, Monsieur, it was M. Dellion's *chef* gave him to me."

"With the result," continued M. Bergeret, "that we now have this soul to care for."

"What soul?" asked Angélique.

"This canine soul. An animal is, properly speaking, a soul; I do not say an immortal soul. And yet, when I come to consider the positions this poor little beast and I myself occupy in the scheme of things, I recognize in both exactly the same right to immortality."

After considerable hesitation, old Angélique, with a painful effort that made her upper lip curl up and reveal her two remaining teeth, said:

"If Monsieur does not want a dog, I will return him to M. Dellion's *chef;* but you may safely keep him, I assure you. You won't see or hear him."

She had hardly finished her sentence when the puppy, hearing a heavy van rolling down the street, sat bolt upright on M. Bergeret's knees, and began to bark both loud and long, so that the window-panes resounded with the noise.

M. Bergeret smiled.

"He's a watch-dog," said Angélique, by way of excuse. "They are by far the most faithful."

"Have you given him anything to eat?" asked M. Bergeret."

"Of course," returned Angélique.

"What does he eat?"

"Monsieur must be aware that dogs eat bread and meat."

Somewhat piqued, M. Bergeret retorted that in her eagerness she might very likely have taken him away from his mother before he was old enough to leave her, upon which he was lifted up again and re-examined, only to make sure of the fact that he was at least six months old.

M. Bergeret put him down on the carpet, and regarded him with interest.

"Isn't he pretty?" said the servant.

"No, he is not pretty," replied M. Bergeret. "But he is engaging, and has beautiful eyes. That is what people used to say about me," added the professor, "when I was three times as old, and not half as intelligent. Since then I have no doubt acquired an outlook upon the universe which he will never attain. But, in comparison with the Absolute, I may say that my knowledge equals his in the smallness of its extent. Like his, it is a geometrical point in the infinite." Then, addressing the little creature who was sniffing the waste-paper basket, he went on: "Smell it out, sniff it well, take from the outside world all the knowledge that can reach your simple brain through the medium of that black truffle-like nose of yours. And what though I at the same time observe, and compare, and study? We shall never know, neither the one nor the other of us, why we have been put into this world, and what we are doing in it. What are we here for, eh?"

As he had spoken rather loudly, the puppy looked at him anxiously, and M. Bergeret, returning to the thought which had first filled his mind. said to the servant:

"We must give him a name."

With her hands folded in front of her she replied laughingly that that would not be a difficult matter.

Upon which M. Bergeret made the private reflection that to the simple all things are simple, but that clear-sighted souls, who look upon things from many and divers aspects, invisible to the vulgar mind, experience the greatest difficulty in coming to a decision about even the most trivial matters. And he cudgelled his brains, trying to hit upon a name for the little

living thing that was busily engaged in nibbling the fringe of the carpet.

"All the names of dogs," thought he, "preserved in the ancient treatises of the huntsmen of old, such as Fouilloux, and in the verses of our sylvan poets such as La Fontaine—Finaud, Miraut, Briffaut, Ravaud, and such-like names, are given to sporting dogs, who are the aristocracy of the kennel, the chivalry of the canine race. The dog of Ulysses was called Argos, and he was a hunter too, so Homer tells us. 'In his youth he hunted the little hares of Ithaca, but now he was old and hunted no more.' What we require is something quite different. The names given by old maids to their lap-dogs would be more suitable, were they not usually pretentious and absurd. Azor, for instance, is ridiculous!"

So M. Bergeret ruminated, calling to memory many a dog name, without being able to decide, however, on one that pleased him. He would have liked to invent a name, but lacked the imagination.

"What day is it?" he asked at last.

"The ninth," replied Angélique, "Thursday, the ninth."

"Well, then!" said M. Bergeret, "can't we call the dog Thursday, like Robinson Crusoe who called his man Friday, for the same reason?"

"As Monsieur pleases," said Angélique. "But it isn't very pretty."

"Very well," said M. Bergeret, "find a name for the creature yourself, for, after all, you brought him here."

"Oh, no," said the servant. "I couldn't find a name for him; I'm not clever enough. When I saw him lying on the straw in the kitchen; I called him Riquet, and he came up and played about under my skirts."

"You called him Riquet, did you?" cried M. Bergeret. "Why didn't you say so before? Riquet he is and Riquet he shall remain; that's settled. Now be off with you, and take Riquet with you. I want to work."

"Monsieur," returned Angélique, "I am going to leave the puppy with you; I will come for him when I get back from market."

"You could quite well take him to market with you," retorted M. Bergeret.

"Monsieur, I am going to church as well."

It was quite true that she really was going to church at Saint-Exupère, to ask for a Mass to be said for the repose of her husband's soul. She did that regularly once a year, not that she had ever been informed of the decease of Borniche, who had never communicated with her since his desertion, but it was a settled thing in the good woman's mind that Borniche was dead. She had therefore no fear of his coming to rob her of the little she had, and did her best to fix things up to his advantage in the other world, so long as he left her in peace in this one.

"Eh!" ejaculated M. Bergeret. "Shut him up in the kitchen or some other convenient place, and do not wor——"

He did not finish his sentence, for Angélique had vanished, purposely pretending not to hear, that she might leave Riquet with his master. She wanted them to grow used to one another, and she also wanted to give poor, friendless M. Bergeret a companion. Having closed the door behind her, she went along the corridor and down the steps.

M. Bergeret set to work again and plunged head foremost into his *Virgilius nauticus*. He loved the work; it rested his thoughts, and became a kind of game that suited him, for he played it all by himself. On the table beside him were several boxes filled with pegs, which he fixed into little squares of cardboard to represent the fleet of Æneas. Now while he was thus occupied he felt something like tiny fists tapping at his legs. Riquet, whom he had quite forgotten, was standing on his hind legs patting his master's knees, and wagging his little stump of a tail. When he tired of this, he let his paws slide down the trouser leg, then got up and began his coaxing over again. And M. Bergeret, turning away from the printed lore before him, saw two brown eyes gazing up at him lovingly.

"What gives a human beauty to the gaze of this dog," he thought, "is probably that it varies unceasingly, being by turns bright and vivacious, or serious and sorrowful; because through these eyes his little dumb soul finds expression for thought that lacks nothing in depth nor sequence. My father was very fond of cats, and, consequently, I liked them too. He used to declare that cats are the wise man's best companions, for they respect his studious hours. Bajazet, his Persian cat, would sit at night for hours at a stretch, motionless and majestic, perched on a corner of his table. I still remember the agate eyes of Bajazet, but those jewel-like orbs concealed all thought, that owl-like stare was cold, and hard, and wicked. How much do I prefer the melting gaze of the dog!"

Riquet, however, was agitating his paws in frantic fashion, and M. Bergeret, who was anxious to return to his philological amusements, said kindly, but shortly:

"Lie down, Riquet!"

Upon which Riquet went and thrust his nose against the door through which Angélique had passed out. And there he remained, uttering from time to time plaintive, meek little cries. After a while he began to scratch, making a gentle rasping noise on the polished floor with his nails. Then the whining began again followed by more scratching. Disturbed by these sounds, M. Bergeret sternly bade him keep still.

Riquet peered at him sorrowfully with his brown eyes, then, sitting down, he looked at M. Bergeret again, rose, returned to the door, sniffed underneath it, and wailed afresh.

"Do you want to go out?" asked M. Bergeret.

Putting down his pen, he went to the door, which he held a few inches open. After making sure that he was running no risk of hurting himself on the way out, Riquet slipped through the doorway and marched off with a composure that was scarcely polite. On returning to his table, M. Bergeret, sensitive man that he was, pondered over the dog's action. He said to himself:

"I was on the point of reproaching the animal for going without saying either good-bye or thank you, and expecting him to apologize for leaving me. It was the beautiful human expression of his eyes that made me so foolish. I was beginning to look upon him as one of my own kind."

After making this reflection M. Bergeret applied himself anew to the metamorphosis of the ships of Æneas, a legend both pretty and popular, but perhaps a trifle too simple in itself for expression in such noble language. M. Bergeret, however, saw nothing incongruous in it. He knew that the nursery tales have furnished material for nearly all epics, and that Virgil had carefully collected together in his poem the riddles, the puns, the uncouth stories, and the puerile imaginings of his forefathers; that Homer, his master and the master of all the bards, had done little more than tell over again what the good wives of Ionia and the fishermen of the islands had been narrating for more than a thousand years before him. Besides, for the time being, this was the least of his worries; he had another far more important preoccupation. An expression, met with in the course of the charming story of the metamorphosis, did not appear sufficiently plain to him. That was what was worrying him.

"Bergeret, my friend," he said to himself, "this is where you must open your eyes and show your sense. Remember that Virgil always expresses himself with extreme precision when writing on the technique of the arts; remember that he went yachting at Baïae, that he was an expert in naval construction, and that therefore his language, in this passage, must have a precise and definite signification."

And M. Bergeret carefully consulted a great number of texts, in order to throw a light upon the word which he could not understand, and which he had to explain. He was almost on the point of grasping the solution, or, at any rate, he had caught a glimpse of it, when he heard a noise like the rattling of chains at his door, a noise which, although not alarming, struck him as curious. The disturbance was presently accompanied by a shrill whining, and M. Bergeret, interrupted in his philological investigations, immediately concluded that these importunate wails must emanate from Riquet.

As a matter of fact, after having looked vainly all over the house for Angélique, Riquet had been seized with a desire to see M. Bergeret again. Solitude was as painful to him as human society was dear. In order to put an end to the noise, and also because he had a secret desire to see Riquet again, M. Bergeret got up from his arm-chair and opened the door, and Riquet re-entered the study with the same coolness with which he had quitted it, but as soon as he saw the door close behind him he assumed a melancholy expression, and began to wander up and down the room like a soul in torment.

He had a sudden way of appearing to find something of interest beneath the chairs and tables, and would sniff long and noisily; then he would walk aimlessly about or sit down in a corner with an air of great humility, like the beggars who are to be seen in church porches. Finally be began to bark at a cast of Hermes which stood upon the mantel-shelf, whereupon M. Bergeret addressed him in words full of just reproach.

"Riquet! such vain agitation, such sniffing and barking were better suited to a stable than to the study of a professor, and they lead one to suppose that your ancestors lived with horses whose straw litters they shared. I do not reproach you

with that. It is only natural you should have inherited their habits, manners, and tendencies as well as their close-cropped coat, their sausage-like body, and their long, thin nose. I do not speak of your beautiful eyes, for there are few men, few dogs even, who can open such beauties to the light of day. But, leaving all that aside, you are a mongrel, my friend, a mongrel from your short, bandy legs to your head. Again I am far from despising you for that. What I want you to understand is that if you desire to live with me, you will have to drop your mongrel manners and behave like a *scholar*, in other words, to remain silent and quiet, to respect work, after the manner of Bajazet, who of a night would sit for four hours without stirring, and watch my father's pen skimming over the paper. He was a silent and tactful creature. How different is your own character, my friend! Since you came into this chamber of study your hoarse voice, your unseemly snufflings and your whines, that sound like steam whistles, have constantly confused my thoughts and interrupted my reflections. And now you have made me lose the drift of an important passage in Servius, referring to the construction of one of the ships of Æneas. Know then, Riquet, my friend, that this is the house of silence and the abode of meditation, and that if you are anxious to stay here vou must become literary. Be quiet!"

Thus spoke M. Bergeret. Riquet, who had listened to him with mute astonishment, approached his master, and with suppliant gesture placed a timid paw upon the knee, which he seemed to revere in a fashion that savoured of long ago. Then a kind thought struck M. Bergeret. He picked him up by the scruff of his neck, and put him upon the cushions of the ample easy chair in which he was sitting. Turning himself round three times, Riquet lay down, and then remained perfectly still and silent. He was quite happy. M. Bergeret was grateful to him, and as he ran through Servius he occasionally stroked the close-cropped coat, which, without being soft, was smooth and very pleasant to the touch. Riquet fell into a gentle doze, and communicated to his master the generous warmth of his body, the subtle, gentle heat of a living, breathing thing. And from that moment M. Bergeret found more pleasure in his *Virgilius nauticus*.

From floor to ceiling his study was lined with deal shelves, bearing books arranged in methodical order. One glance, and all that remains to us of Latin thought was ready to his hand. The Greeks lay halfway up. In a quiet corner, easy of access, were Rabelais, the excellent story-tellers of the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, Bonaventure des Périers, Guillaume Bouchet, and all the old French "conteurs," whom M. Bergeret considered better adapted to humanity than writings in the more heroic style, and who were the favourite reading of his leisure. He possessed them in cheap modern editions only, but he had discovered a poor bookbinder in the town who covered his volumes with leaves from a book of anthems, and it gave M. Bergeret the keenest pleasure to see these free-spoken gentlemen thus clad in Requiems and Misereres. This was the sole luxury and the only peculiarity of his austere library. The other books were paper-backed or bound in poor and worn-out bindings. The gentle friendly manner in which they were handled by their owner gave them the look of tools set out in a busy man's workshop. The books of archæology and art found a resting-place on the highest shelves, not by any means out of contempt, but because they were not so often used.

Now, while M. Bergeret worked at his *Virgilius nauticus* and shared his chair with Riquet, he found, as chance would have it, that it was necessary to consult Ottfried Müller's little *Manual*, which happened to be on one of the topmost shelves.

There was no need of one of those tall ladders on wheels topped by railings and a shelf, to enable him to reach the book; there were ladders of this description in the town library, and they had been used by all the great book-lovers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; indeed, several of the latter had fallen from them, and thus died honourable deaths, in the manner spoken of in the pamphlet entitled: *Des bibliophiles qui moururent en tombant de leur échelle.*

No, indeed! M. Bergeret had no need of anything of the sort. A small pair of folding steps would have served his purpose excellently well, and he had once seen some in the shop of Clérambaut, the cabinet-maker, in the Rue de Josde. They folded up, and looked just the thing, with their bevelled uprights each pierced with a trefoil as a grip for the hand. M. Bergeret would have given anything to possess them, but the state of his finances, which were somewhat involved, forced him to abandon the idea. No one knew better than he did that

financial ills are not mortal, but, for all that, he had no steps in his study.

In place of such a pair of steps he used an old cane-bottomed chair, the back of which had been broken, leaving only two horns or antennæ, which had shown themselves to be more dangerous than useful. So they had been cut to the level of the seat, and the chair had become a stool. There were two reasons why this stool was ill-fitted to the use to which M. Bergeret was wont to put it. In the first place the woven-cane seat had grown slack with long use, and now contained a large hollow, making one's foothold precarious. In the second place the stool was too low, and it was hardly possible when standing upon it to reach the books on the highest shelf, even with the finger-tips. What generally happened was that in the endeavour to grasp one book, several others fell out; and it depended upon their being bound or paper-covered whether they lay with broken corners, or sprawled with leaves spread like a fan or a concertina.

Now, with the intention of getting down the *Manual* of Ottfried Müller, M. Bergeret quitted the chair he was sharing with Riquet, who, rolled into a ball with his head tight pressed to his body, lay in warm comfort, opening one voluptuous eye, which he re-closed as quickly. Then M. Bergeret drew the stool from the dark corner where it was hidden and placed it where it was required, hoisted himself upon it, and managed, by making his arm as long as possible, and straining upon tiptoe, to touch, first with one then with two fingers, the back of a book which he judged to be the one he was needing. As for the thumb, it remained below the shelf and rendered no assistance whatever. M. Bergeret, who found it therefore exceedingly difficult to draw out the book, made the reflection that the reason why the hand is a precious implement is on account of the position of the thumb, and that no being could rise to be an artist who had four feet and no hands.

"It is to the hand," he reflected, "that men owe their power of becoming engineers, painters, writers, and manipulators of all kinds of things. If they had not a thumb as well as their other fingers, they would be as incapable as I am at this moment, and they could never have changed the face of the earth as they have done. Beyond a doubt it is the shape of the hand that has assured to man the conquest of the world."

Then, almost simultaneously, M. Bergeret remembered that monkeys, who possess four hands, have not, for all that, created the arts, nor disposed the earth to their use, and he erased from his mind the theory upon which he had just embarked. However, he did the best he could with his four fingers. It must be known that Ottfried Müller's *Manual* is composed of three volumes and an atlas. M. Bergeret wanted Volume I. He pulled out first the second volume, then the atlas, then volume three, and finally the book that he required. At last he held it in his hands. All that now remained for him to do was to descend, and this he was about to do when the cane seat gave way beneath his foot, which passed through it. He lost his balance and fell to the ground, not as heavily as might have been feared, for he broke his fall by grasping at one of the uprights of the bookshelf.

He was on the ground, however, full of astonishment, and wearing on one leg the broken chair; his whole body was permeated and as though constricted by a pain that spread all over it, and that presently settled itself more particularly in the region of the left elbow and hip upon which he had fallen. But, as his anatomy was not seriously damaged, he gathered his wits together; he had got so far as to realize that he must draw his right leg out of the stool in which it had so unfortunately become entangled, and that he must be careful to raise himself up on his right side, which was unhurt. He was even trying to put this into execution when he felt a warm breath upon his cheek, and turning his eyes, which fright and pain had for the moment fixed, he saw close to his cheek Riquet's little face.

At the sound of the fall Riquet had jumped down from the chair and run to his unfortunate master; he was now standing near him in a state of great excitement; then he commenced to run round him. First he came near out of sympathy, then he retreated out of fear of some mysterious danger. He understood perfectly well that a misfortune had taken place, but he was neither thoughtful nor clever enough to discover what it was; hence his anxiety. His fidelity drew him to his suffering friend, and his prudence stopped him on the very brink of the fatal spot. Encouraged at length by the calm and silence which eventually reigned, he licked M. Bergeret's neck and looked at him with eyes of fear and of love. The fallen master smiled, and the dog licked the end of his nose. It

was a great comfort to M. Bergeret, who freed his right leg, stood erect, and limped good-humouredly back to his chair.

Riquet was there before him. All that could be seen of his eyes was a gleam between the narrow slit of the half-closed lids. He seemed to have forgotten all about the adventure that a moment before had so stirred them both. The little creature lived in the present, with no thought of time that had run its course; not that he was wanting in memory, inasmuch as he could remember, not his own past alone, but the far-away past of his ancestors, and his little head was a rich storehouse of useful knowledge; but he took no pleasure in remembrance, and memory was not for him, as it was for M. Bergeret, a divine muse.

Gently stroking the short, smooth coat of his companion, M. Bergeret addressed him in the following affectionate terms:

"Dog! at the price of the repose which is dear to your heart, you came to me when I was dismayed and brought low. You did not laugh, as any young person of my own species would have done. It is true that however joyous or terrible nature may appear to you at times, she never inspires you with a sense of the ridiculous. And it is for that very reason, because of your innocent gravity, that you are the surest friend a man can have. In the first instance I inspired confidence and admiration in you, and now you show me pity.

"Dog! when we first met on the highway of life, we came from the two poles of creation; we belong to different species. I refer to this with no desire to take advantage of it, but rather with a strong sense of universal brotherhood. We have hardly been acquainted two hours, and my hand has never yet fed you. What can be the meaning of the obscure love for me that has sprung up in your little heart? The sympathy you bestow on me is a charming mystery, and I accept it. Sleep, friend, in the place that you have chosen!"

Having thus spoken, M. Bergeret turned over the leaves of Ottfried Müller's *Manual*, which with marvelous instinct he had kept in his hand both during and after his fall. He turned over the pages, and could not find what he sought.

Every movement, however, seemed to increase the pain he was feeling.

"I believe," he thought, "that the whole of my left side is bruised and my hip swollen. I have a suspicion that my right leg is grazed all over and my left elbow aches and burns, but shall I cavil at pain that has led me to the discovery of a friend?"

His reflexions were running thus when old Angélique, breathless and perspiring, entered the study. She first opened the door, and then she knocked, for she never permitted herself to enter without knocking. If she had not done so before she opened the door, she did it after, for she had good manners, and knew what was expected of her. She went in therefore, knocked, and said:

"Monsieur, I have come to relieve you of the dog."

M. Bergeret heard these words with decided annoyance. He had not as yet inquired into his claims to Riquet, and now realized that he had none. The thought that Madame Borniche might take the animal away from him filled him with sadness, yet, after all, Riquet did belong to her. Affecting indifference, he replied:

"He's asleep; let him sleep!"

"Where is he? I don't see him," remarked old Angélique.

"Here he is," answered M. Bergeret. "In my chair."

With her two hands clasped over her portly figure, old Angélique smiled, and, in a tone of gentle mockery, ventured:

"I wonder what pleasure the creature can find in sleeping there behind Monsieur!"

"That," retorted M. Bergeret, "is his business."

Then, as he was of inquiring mind, he immediately sought of Riquet his reasons for the selection of his resting-place, and lighting on them, replied with his accustomed candour:

"I keep him warm, and my presence affords a sense of security; my comrade is a chilly and homely little animal." Then he added: "Do you know, Angélique? I will go out presently and buy him a collar."

LOSS—By ANTONIO MACHADO

NOTHING is lost? But you'll admit,
When shattered crystal strews the floor,
That I shall never drink from it—
Never, any more.

The Price of the Head

By JOHN RUSSELL

THE possessions of Christopher Alexander Pellett were these: his name, which he was always careful to retain intact; a suit of ducks, no longer intact, in which he lived and slept; a continuous thirst for liquor, and a set of red whiskers. Also he had a friend. Now, no man can gain friendship, even among the gentle islands of Polynesia, except by virtue of some quality attaching to him. Strength, humour, villainy: he must show some trait by which the friend can catch and hold. How, then, explain the loving devotion lavished upon Christopher Alexander Pellett by Karaki, the company boat-boy? This was the mystery at Fufuti.

There was no harm in Pellett. He never quarreled. He never raised his fist. Apparently he had never learned that a white man's foot, though it wabble ever so much, is given him wherewith to kick natives out of the road. He never even cursed any one except himself and the Chinese half-caste who sold him brandy: which was certainly allowable because the brandy was very bad.

On the other hand, there was no perceptible good in him. He had long lost the will to toil, and latterly even the skill to beg. He did not smile, nor dance, nor exhibit any of the amiable eccentricities that sometimes recommend the drunken to a certain toleration. In any other part of the world he must have passed without a struggle. But some chance had drifted him to the beaches where life is as easy as a song, and his particular fate had given him a friend. And so he persisted. That was all. He persisted, a sodden lump of flesh preserved in alcohol. . . .

Karaki, his friend, was a heathen from Bougainville, where some people are smoked and others eaten. Being a black, a Melanesian, he was as much an alien in brown Fufuti as any white. He was a serious, efficient little man with deeply sunken eyes, a great mop of kinky hair, and a complete absence of expression. His tastes were simple. He wore a red cotton kerchief belted around his waist and a brass curtain ring suspended from his nose.

Some powerful chief in his home island had sold Karaki into the service of the trading company for three years, annexing his salary of tobacco and beads in advance. When the time should be accomplished, Karaki would be shipped back to Bougainville, a matter of some eight hundred miles, where he would land no richer than before, except in experience. This was the custom. Karaki may have had plans of his own.

It is seldom that one of the black races of the Pacific shows any of the virtues for which subject populations are admired. Fidelity and humility can be exacted from other colours between tan and chocolate. But the black remains the inscrutable savage. His secret heart is his own. Hence the astonishment of Fufuti, which knew the ways of black recruits, when Karaki took the worthless beachcomber to his bosom.

"Hy, you, Johnny," called Moy Jack, the Chinese half-caste. "Better you come catch this fella mahster b'long you. He fella plenty too much drunk, galow."

Karaki left the shade of the copra shed where he had been waiting an hour or more, and came forward to receive the sagging bulk that was thrust out of doors. He took it scientifically by wrist and armpit and swung toward the beach. Moy Jack stood on his threshold watching with cynic interest.

"Hy, you," he said; "what name you make so much bobeley 'long that fella mahster? S'pose you bling me all them fella pearl; me pay you one dam fella good trade—my word!"

It annoyed Moy Jack that he had to provide the white man with a daily drunk in exchange for the little seed pearls with which Pellett was always flush. He knew where those pearls came from. Karaki did forbidden diving in the lagoon to get them. Moy Jack made a good thing of the traffic, but he could have made a much better thing by trading directly with Karaki for a few sticks of tobacco.

"What name you give that fella mahster all them fella pearl?" demanded Moy Jack offensively. "He plenty too much no good, galow. Close up he die altogether."

Karaki did not reply. He looked at Moy Jack once, and the half-caste trailed off into mutterings. For an instant there showed a strange light in Karaki's dull eyes, like the flat, green flicker of a turning shark glimpsed ten fathoms down. . . .

Karaki bore his charge down the beach to the little thatched shelter of pandanus leaves that was all his home. Tenderly he eased Pellett to a mat, pillowed his head, bathed him with cool water, brushed the filth from his hair and whiskers. Pellett's whiskers were true whiskers, the kind that sprout like the barbels of a catfish, and they were a glorious, coppery, sun-gilt red. Karaki combed them out with a sandalwood comb. Later he sat by with a fan and kept the flies from the bloated face of the drunkard.

It was a little past midday when something brought him scurrying into the open. For weeks he had been studying every weather sign. He knew that the change was due when the southeast trade begins to harden through this flawed belt of calms and cross winds. And now, as he watched, the sharp shadows began to blur along the sands and a film crept over the face of the sun.

All Fufuti was asleep. The house boys snored in the back veranda. Under his netting the agent dreamed happily of big copra shipments and bonuses. Moy Jack dozed among his bottles. Nobody would have been mad enough to stir abroad in the noon hour of repose: nobody but Karaki, the untamed black, who cared nothing for custom nor yet for dreams. The light pad of his steps was lost in the surf drone on the barrier reefs. He flitted to and fro like a wraith. And while Fufuti slept he applied himself to a job for which he had never been hired. . . .

Karaki had long ago ascertained two vital facts: where the key to the trade room was kept and where the rifles and ammunition were hidden. He opened the trade room and selected three bolts of turkey red cloth, a few knives, two cases of tobacco, and a fine small ax. There was much else he might have taken as well. But Karaki was a man of simple tastes, and efficient.

With the ax he next forced the rifle chest and removed therefrom one Winchester and a big box of cartridges. With the ax again he broke into the boat sheds. Finally with the ax he smashed the bottoms out of the whaleboat and the two cutters, so they would be of no use to any one for many days to come. It was really a very handy little ax, a true tomahawk, ground to a shaving edge. Karaki took a workman's pleasure in its keen, deep strokes. It was almost his chief prize.

On the beach lay a big proa, a stout outrigger canoe of the kind Karaki's own people used at Bougainville, so high of prow and stern as to be nearly crescent-shaped. The northwest monsoon of last season had washed it ashore at Fufuti, and Karaki had repaired it, by the agent's own order. This proa he now launched in the lagoon, and aboard of it he stored his loot.

Of supplies he had to make a hasty selection. He took a bag of rice and another of sweet potatoes. He took as many coconuts as he could carry in a net in three trips. He took a cask of water and a box of biscuit.

And here happened an odd thing.

In his search for the biscuit he came upon the agent's private store of liquor, a dozen bottles of rare Irish whisky. He glanced at them and passed them by. He knew what the stuff was, and he was a savage, a black man. But he passed it by. When Moy Jack heard of that later he remembered what he had seen in Karaki's eyes and ventured the surprizing prediction that Karaki would never be taken alive.

When all was ready Karaki went back to his thatch and aroused Christopher Alexander Pellett.

"Hy, mahster, you come 'long me."

Mr. Pellett sat up and looked at him. That is to say, he looked. Whether he saw anything or not belongs among the obscurer questions of psychopathy.

"Too late," said Mr. Pellett profoundly. "This shop is closed. Copy boy! Give all those damned loafers good-night. I'm—I'm goin'—bed!"

Whereupon he fell flat on his back.

"Wake up, mahster," insisted Karaki, shaking him. "You too much strong fella sleep. Hy-ah, mahster! Rum! You

like'm rum? You catch'm rum any amount —my word! Plenty rum, mahster!"

But even this magic call, which never failed to rouse Pellett from his couch in the mornings, fell now on deaf ears. Pellett had had his skinful, and the fitness of things decreed that he should soak the clock around.

Karaki knelt beside him, pried him up until he could get a shoulder under his middle, and lifted him like a loose bag of meal. Pellett weighed one hundred and fifty pounds; Karaki not much more than a hundred. Yet in some deft coolie fashion of his own the little black man packed his burden, with the feet dragging behind, clear down to the beach. Moreover, he managed to get it aboard the proa. Pellett was half drowned and the proa half swamped. But Karaki managed.

No man saw their departure. Fufuti still dreamed on. Long before the agent awoke to wrath and ruin their queer crescent craft had slipped from the lagoon and faded away on the wings of the trade.

That first day Karaki had all he could do to keep the proa running straight before the wind. Big smoky seas came piling up out of the southeast and would have piled aboard if he had given them the least chance. He was only a heathen who did not know a compass from a degree of latitude. But his forefathers used to people these waters on cockleshell voyages that make the venture of Columbus look like a ride in a ferry-boat. Karaki bailed with a tin pan and sailed with a mat and steered with a paddle: but he proceeded.

Along about sunrise Mr. Pellett stirred in the bilge and raised a pea-green face. He took one bewildered glance overside at the seething waste and collapsed with a groan. After a decent interval he tried again, but this was an illusion that would not pass, and he twisted around to Karaki sitting crouched and all aglisten with spray in the stern.

"Rum!" he demanded.

Karaki shook his head, and a haunted look crept into Pellett's eyes.

"Take—take away all that stuff," he begged pathetically, pointing at the ocean. . . .

Thereafter for two days he was very, very sick, and he learned how a small boat in any kind of a sea can move forty-seven different ways within one and the same minute. This is no trifling bit of knowledge, as those who have acquired it can tell. It was nearly fatal to Pellett.

On the third day he awoke with a mouth and a stomach of fumed leather and a great weakness, but otherwise in command of his few faculties. The gale had fallen and Karaki was quietly preparing fresh cocoanuts. Pellett quaffed two before he thought to miss the brandy with which his breakfast draft was always laced. But when he remembered, the milk choked in his throat.

"Me like'm rum."

"No got'm rum."

Pellett looked forward and aft, to windward and to lee. There was a great deal of horizon in sight, but nothing else. For the first time he was aware of a strangeness in events.

"What name you come so far?" he asked.

"We catch'm one big fella wind," explained Karaki.

Pellett was in no condition to question his statement nor to observe from the careful stocking of the proa that they had not been blown to sea on a casual fishing trip. Pellett had other things to think of. Some of the things were pink and others purple and others were striped like the rainbow in most surprizing designs, and all were highly novel and interesting. They came thronging out of the vasty deep to entertain Christopher Alexander Pellett. Which they did.

You cannot cut off alcohol from a man who has been continuously pickled for two years without results more or less picturesque. These were days when the proa went shouting across the empty southern seas to madrigal and choric song. Tied hand and foot and lashed under a thwart, Pellett raved in the numbers of his innocent youth. It would have been singular hearing had there been any to hear, but there was only Karaki, who did not care for the lesser Cavalier poets and on whom whole pages of "Atalanta in Calydon" were quite wasted. Now and then he threw a dipperful of sea water over the white man, or spread a mat to keep the sun from him, or fed him coconut milk by force. Karaki was a poor audience, but an excellent nurse. Also, he combed Pellett's whiskers twice every day.

They ran into calms. But the trade picked them up again more gently, so that Karaki ventured to make westing, and they fled under skies as bright as polished brass.

> My heart is within me
> As an ash in the fire;
> Whosoever hath seen me
> Without lute, without lyre,
> Shall sing of me grievous things,
> even things that were ill
> to desire—

Thus chanted Christopher Alexander Pellett, whose face began to show a little more like flesh and a little less like rotten kelp. . . .

Whenever a fair chance offered, Karaki landed on the lee of some one of the tiny islets with which the Santa Cruz region is peppered, and would make shift to cook rice and potatoes in the tin dipper. This was risky, for one day the islet proved to be inhabited. Two white men in a cutter came out to stop them. Karaki could not hide his resemblance to a runaway nigger, and he did not try to. But when the cutter approached within fifty yards he suddenly announced himself as a runaway nigger with a gun. He left the cutter sinking and one of the men dead.

"There's a bullet hole alongside me here," said Pellett from under the thwart. "You'd better plug it."

Karaki plugged it and released his passenger, who sat up and began stretching himself with a certain naïve curiosity of his own body.

"So you're real," observed Pellett, staring hard at Karaki. "By George, you *are*, and that's a comfort."

He was right. Karaki was very real.

"What side you take'm this fella canoe?"

"Balbi," said Karaki, using the native word for Bougainville.

Pellett whistled. An eight-hundred-mile evasion in an open boat was considerable undertaking. It enlisted his respect. Moreover, he had just had emphatic proof of the efficiency of this little black man.

"Balbi all same home b'long you?"

"Yes."

"All right, commodore," said Pellett. "Lead on. I don't know why you shipped me for supercargo, but I'll see you through."

Strangely—or perhaps not so strangely—the whole Fufuti interval of his history had been fading from his brain while the poison was ebbing from his tissues. The Christopher Alexander Pellett that emerged was one from earlier years: pretty much of a wreck, it was true, and a feckless, indolent, paltry creature at best, but ordinarily human and rather more than ordinarily intelligent.

He was very feeble at first, but Karaki's diet of coconuts and sweet potatoes did wonders for him, and the time came when he could rejoice in the good salt taste of the spray on his lips and forget for hours together the crazy craving for stimulant. They made a strange crew, this pair—simple savage and convalescent drunkard—but there was never any question as to which was in command. That was well seen in the third week when their food began to fail and Pellett noticed that Karaki ate nothing for a whole day.

"See here, this won't do," he cried. "You've given me the last coconut and kept none for yourself."

"Me no like'm eat," said Karaki shortly.

Christopher Alexander Pellett pondered many matters in long, idle hours while the rush of foam under the proa and the creak and fling of her outriggers were the only sounds between sea and sky. Sometimes his brow was knotted with pain. It is not always pleasant to be wrenched back into level contact with one's memories. Thoughts are no sweeter company for having long been drowned. He had met the horrors of delirium. He had now to face the livelier devils of his past. He had fled them before.

But here was no escape of any kind. So he turned and grappled with them and laid them one by one.

When they had been at sea twenty-nine days they had nothing left of their provisions but a little water. Karaki doled it out by moistening a shred of coconut husk and giving Pellett the shred to suck. In spite of Pellett's petulant protest, he would take none himself. Again the heathen nursed the derelict, this time through the last stages of thirst, scraping the staves of the cask and feeding him the ultimate drop of moisture on the point of a knife.

On the thirty-sixth day from Fufuti they sighted Choiseul, a great green wall that built up slowly across the west.

Once fairly under its headlands, Karaki might have indulged a certain triumph. He had taken as his target the whole length of the Solomons, some six hundred miles. But to have fetched the broadside of them anywhere in such a craft as the proa through storm and current, without instrument or chart, was distinctly a feat of navigation. Karaki, however, did no celebrating. Instead, he stared long and anxiously over his shoulder into the east.

The wind had been fitful since morning. By noon it was dead calm on a restless, oily sea. A barometer would have told evil tales, but Karaki must have guessed them anyway, for he staggered forward and unstepped the little mast. Then he bound all his cargo securely under the thwarts and put all his remaining strength into the paddle, heading for a small outpost island where a line of white showed beach. They had been very lucky thus far, but they were

still two miles off-shore when the first rush of the hurricane caught them.

Karaki himself was reduced to a rattle of bones in a dried skin, and Pellett could scarce lift a hand. But Karaki fought for Pellett among the waves that leaped up like sheets of fire on the reef. Why or how they got through neither could have said. Perhaps because it was written that after drink, illness, madness, and starvation the white man should be saved by the black man again and a last time from ravening waters. When they came ashore on the islet they were both nearly flayed, but they were alive, and Karaki still gripped Pellett's shirt. . . .

For a week they stayed while Pellett fattened on unlimited coconut and Karaki tinkered the proa. It had landed in a water-logged tangle, but Karaki's treasures were safe. He got his bearings from a passing native fisherman, and then he knew that *all* his treasures were safe. His home island lay across Bougainville Strait, the stretch of water just beyond. . . .

"Balbi over there?" asked Pellett.

"Yes," said Karaki.

"And a mighty good thing too," cried Pellett heartily. "This is the limit of British authority, old boy. Big fella mahster b'long Bretani stop'm here, no can go that side."

Karaki was quite aware of it. If he feared one thing in the world, he feared the Fiji High Court and its Resident Commissioner for the Southern Solomons, who did sure justice upon all who transgressed in its jurisdiction. Once beyond the Strait he might still be liable for the stolen goods and the broken contract. But never—this was the point—never could he be punished for anything he might choose to do over there in Bougainville.

So Karaki was content.

And so was Christopher Alexander Pellett. His body had been wrung and swept and scoured, and he had downed his devils. Sweet air and sunshine were on his lips and in his heart. His bones were sweet in him. As his vigour returned, he swam the lagoon or helped Karaki at the proa. He would spend hours hugging the warm sand or rejoicing in the delicate tracery of some tiny sea shell, singing softly to himself while the ground swell hushed along the beach, savouring life as he never had done.

"Oh, this is good—good!" he said.

Karaki puzzled him. Not that he vexed himself, for a smiling wonder at everything, almost childlike, filled him these days. But he thought of this taciturn savage, how he had capped thankless service with rarest sacrifice.

And now that he could consider soberly, the why of it eluded him. Why? Affection? Friendship? It must be so, and he warmed toward the silent little man with the sunken eyes and the expressionless face from which he could never raise a wink.

"Hy, you Karaki, what name you no laugh all same me? What? You too much fright 'long that fella stuff you steal? Forget it, you old black scamp. If they ever trouble you, I'll square them somehow. By George, I'll say I stole it myself!"

Karaki only grunted and sat down to clean his Winchester with a bit of rag and some drops of oil he had crushed from a dried coconut.

"No, that don't reach him either," murmured Pellett, baffled. "I'd like to know what's going on under that topknot of yours, old chap. You're like Kipling's cat, that walks by himself. God knows I'm not ungrateful. I wish I could show you——"

He sprang up.

"Karaki! Me one big fella friend 'long you: savee? You one big fella friend 'long me: savee? We two damn big fella friend, my word! . . . What?"

"Yes," said Karaki. No other response. He looked at Pellett and he looked away toward Bougainville. "Yes," he said, "my word," and went on cleaning his gun—the black islander, inscrutable, incomprehensible, an enigma always, and to the end.

The end came two days later at Bougainville.

Under a gorgeous dawn they came into a bay that opened before their prow as with jeweled arms of welcome. The land lay lapped in bright garments like a sleeper half awakened, all flushed and smiling, sensuous, intimate, thrilling with life, breathing warm scents——

These were some of the foolish phrases Pellett babbled to himself as he leaped ashore and ran up on a rocky point to see and to feel and to draw all the charm of the place to himself.

Meanwhile Karaki, that simple and efficient little man, was proceeding methodically about his own affairs. He landed his bolts of cloth, his tobacco, his knives, and the other loot. He landed his box of cartridges and his rifle and his fine tomahawk. The goods were somewhat damaged

by sea water, but the weapons had been carefully cleaned and polished. . . .

Pellett was declaiming poetry aloud to the alluring solitude when he was aware of a gentle footfall and turned, surprized to find Karaki standing just behind him with the rifle at his hip and the ax in his hand.

"Well," said Pellett cheerfully, "what d'you want, old chappie?"

"Me like," said Karaki, while there gleamed in his eyes the strange light that Moy Jack had glimpsed there, like the flicker of a turning shark; "me like'm too much one fella head b'long you!"

"What? Head! Whose—my head?"

"Yes," said Karaki simply.

That was the way of it. That was all the mystery. The savage had fallen enamoured of the head of the beachcomber, and Christopher Alexander Pellett had been betrayed by his fatal red whiskers. In Karaki's country a white man's head, well smoked, is a thing to be desired above wealth, above lands and chiefships, fame, and the love of women. In all Karaki's country was no head like the head of Pellett. Therefore Karaki had served to win it with the patience and single faith of a Jacob. For this he had schemed and waited, committed theft and murder, expended sweat and cunning, starved and denied himself, nursed, watched, tended, fed, and saved his man that he might bring the head alive and on the hoof—so to speak—to the spot where he could remove it at leisure and enjoy the fruits of his labor in safety.

Pellett saw all this at a flash, understood it so far as any white could understand: the whole elemental and stupendous simplicity of it. And standing there in his new strength and sanity under the fair promise of the morning, he gave a laugh that pealed across the waters and started the sea birds from their cliffs, the deep-throated laugh of a man who fathoms and accepts the last great jest. . . .

For finally, by corrected list, the possessions of Christopher Alexander Pellett were these: his name, still intact; the ruins of some rusty ducks; his precious red whiskers—and a soul which had been neatly recovered, renewed, refurbished, reanimated, and restored to him by his good friend Karaki.

> Thou shouldst die as he dies,
> For whom none sheddeth tears;
> Filling thine eyes
> And fulfilling thine ears
> With the brilliance . . . the bloom
> and the beauty . . ."

Thus chanted Christopher Alexander Pellett over the waters of the bay, and then whirled, throwing wide his arms:

"Shoot, damn you! It's cheap at the price!"

Light Love

By WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

BESIDE the idle summer sea
And in the vacant summer days,
Light Love came fluting down the ways,
Where you were loitering with me.

Who has not welcomed, even as we,
That jocund minstrel and his lays
Beside the idle summer sea
And in the vacant summer days?

We listened, we were fancy-free;
And lo! in terror and amaze
We stood alone—alone at gaze
With an implacable memory
Beside the idle summer sea.

Invective

A Few Efforts to Find Words and Wishes for People Disliked

Part II

Scotch John Hook Had Brought Suit for Two Bullocks Taken for the Continental Army

"Henry painted the distresses of the American Army, exposed almost naked to the rigour of a winter's sky, and marking the frozen ground over which they marched with the blood of their unshod feet.

"'Where was the man?' said he, 'who had an American heart in his bosom, who would not have thrown open his fields, his barns, his cellars, the doors of his house, the portals of his breast, to receive with open arms the meanest soldier in that little famished band of patriots? Where is the man? *There* he stands; but whether the heart of an American beats in his bosom, you, gentlemen, are to judge.'

"He then carried the jury, by the powers of his imagination, to the plains round York, the surrender of which had followed shortly after the seizure of the cattle . . . they saw the triumph which lighted up every patriot face, and heard the shouts of victory, and the cry of 'Washington and Liberty,' as it rang and echoed through the American ranks, and was reverberated from the hills and shores of the neighbouring river.

"'But hark! what notes of discord are these, which disturb the general joy, and silence the acclamations of victory? They are the notes of John Hook, hoarsely bawling through the American camp, *beef! beef! beef!*'" Wirt's *Patrick Henry.*

His Client, Killed by a Train, Was Stated to Have Been Intoxicated

"The witness swears he stood by the dying man in his last moments. *What was he there for?* Was it to administer those assiduities which are ordinarily proffered at the bedside of dying men? Was it to extend to him the consolations of that religion which for eighteen hundred years has comforted the world? No, gentlemen, no! He leans over the departing sufferer; he bends his face nearer and nearer to him—and what does he do? WHAT DOES HE DO? *Smells gin and brandy!*" Rufus Choate.

Results of Concentrated Companionship

If you want to instigate the art of manslaughter just shut two men up in a eighteen by twenty-two-foot cabin for a month. Human nature won't stand it.

When the first snowflakes fell me and Idaho Green laughed at each other's jokes and praised the stuff we turned out of a skillet and called bread. At the end of three weeks Idaho makes this kind of a edict to me. Says he:

"I never exactly heard sour milk dropping out of a balloon on the bottom of a tin pan, but I have an idea it would be music of the spears compared to this attenuated stream of asphyxiated thought that emanates out of your organs of conversation. The kind of half-masticated noises that you emit every day puts me in mind of a cow's cud, only she's lady enough to keep hers to herself, and you ain't."

"Mr. Green," says I, "you having been a friend of mine once, I have some hesitations in confessing to you that if I had my choice for society between you and a common, yellow, three-legged cur pup, one of the inmates of this here cabin would be wagging a tail just at present."

This way we goes on for two or three days, and then we quits speaking to one another.

O. Henry.

A Simile

You say that beautiful girls burn with love for you, Sextus, who have a face like a man swimming under water! Martial.

This Quaker Was not Peaceful in Words

Woe unto you that are called Lords, Ladies, Knights, Gentlemen, and Gentlewomen, in respect to your persons; who are called of men Master and Sir, and Mistress and Madam. —And you must have your wine and ale, and all your dainty dishes! and you have your fine attire, silk, velvet, and purple, gold and silver; and you have your waiting-men and waiting-maids under you to wait upon you, and your coaches to ride in, and your high and lofty horses. And here you are lords over your fellow-creatures, and they must bow and crouch to you—and you will be called Masters, upholding that which Christ in his doctrine forbids, who says, Be not ye called masters.—The Lord abhors all your profession! Your works are the works of the Devil—in your dainty dishes—in your lofty houses—in your curious buildings—in your earthly honour—which is all but the fruits of the Devil. You are too high and fine, and too lofty to enter in at the strait gate.

The Trumpet of the Lord Blown (*1655*).

What Milton Thought of a Bishop

Episcopacy before all our eyes worsens and sluggs the most learned and seeming religious of our ministers, who no sooner advanced to it, but, like a seething pot set to cool, sensibly exhale and reek out the greatest part of that zeal and those gifts that were formerly in them, settling in a skinny congealment of ease and sloth at the top; and if they keep their learning by some potent sway of nature, 'tis a rare chance; but their devotion most commonly comes to that queazy temper of lukewarmness, that gives a vomit to God himself. *Of Reformation.* John Milton.

The One Exception to Dr. Johnson's Universal Love

From this pleasing subject, he, I know not how or why, made a sudden transition to one upon which he was a violent aggressor; for he said, "I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American*": and his inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire, he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter"; calling them, "Rascals—Robbers—Pirates"; and exclaiming, he'd "burn and destroy them." Miss Seward, looking to him with mild but steady astonishment, said, "Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have injured."—He was irritated still more by this delicate and keen reproach; and roared out another tremendous volley which one might fancy could be heard across the Atlantick. During this tempest, I sat in great uneasiness, lamenting his heat of temper; till, by degrees, I diverted his attention to other topicks.

Boswell's *Samuel Johnson.*

In the Sixteenth Century

(*This poem, of the late sixteenth century, belongs to the vast "literature of abuse" which has a distinct place in Central Asian poetry, and refers to the days when the Mogul emperors of Delhi, using bribery as often as soldiers, tried to subjugate Afghanistan. At first the Moguls succeeded, but later on, after long and disasterous warfare, they were forced to withdraw their troops to Hindustan.*)

To-day, of the Afghans once famed in the snow-clad hills,
Are left the tribes of Mohmands, Bangashis, Warakzais, and Afridis.

The hounds of the Mohmands are better than the Bangashis,
Though the Mohmands themselves are worse than dogs.
The Warakzais are the scavenger-vultures of the Afridis,
Though they, all of them, are only carrion-crows.

This is the truth about the best tribes of the Afghans.
Allah! What then can I say about the worst?
In living Afghans is neither truth nor decency.
All the good Afghans are dead and buried.

Still—to-day of all the Afghans the Mohmands are the best.
This is a plain and simple fact to all who know the hills.

He to whom the Mogul emperor said: "You are loyal to me,"
Allah forbid that I should hide his stinking shame!
Let the Afghans drive all honour from their foul souls,
For they have been purchased by the Moguls' red gold.

Translated by ACHMED ABDULLAH.

IT ALMOST SEEMS HE DOESN'T CARE FOR US

Mr. Hoover has lately said, in the preliminary report which he made as Secretary of Commerce that "the standard of living in the United States was the highest in the country's history, and therefore the highest in all history." Why he wrote the last seven words we do not know. Surely it is recognized all the world over that the United States can be compared only with themselves. What have they to do with history? Before they came into being history was not, and they have marked their own marvelous progress by the breaking of all known records. You see them with one hand pocketing dollars, with the other distributing "ideals" to the dark and awe-struck Europe. If only gold can do the trick in a few years all Europe will be on its knees in front of the United States, begging for the crumbs that fall from the heavily laden table of successful materialism. . . .

And yet when they are celebrating their material splendour, when they are letting the whole world know how great they are, how much greater they shall be, are there no reflections which check their pride, is there no humility which suggests that perhaps, even with the highest standard aforementioned, all is not well with the United States. . . .?

Ever since they revolted against England, which once was their mother-country, and no longer is the mother-country of their cosmopolitans, they have been growing in arrogance and wealth. . . . Their vanity persuades them to believe that if they be present when any deed is done, they did it. It is this strange hallucination which causes them to boast aloud that they won the war. . . . They believe one another, though nobody else believes them, and they will end by making themselves supremely ridiculous. . . .

Who shall respect those who respect themselves so little as to babble such things as these? But they have "the highest standard of living in the country's history, and therefore the highest in all history." We are not likely to forget this eloquent statement. We can but ask whether it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul.

In private, as in public, the Americans lack delicacy. In public they proclaim aloud that they won the war. In private, in spite of their grandeur, in spite of their "highest standard of living," they addict themselves to the collection of souvenirs. The souvenirs which they collect belong naturally to others. This fact does not deter them from the chase. Many of them, no matter where they are entertained, think that the day is misspent if they do not carry away with them some trophy, however small. . . . And until this indelicate habit is corrected, the United States cannot hope to live on terms of intimacy with civilized Europe, whose standard of living may be unhappily depressed.

Not for one moment would we give our tradition, our respect for intelligence, our care for things of the mind, for all the gold which is stored in the treasury of New York. There is very little that money can buy, and no sane man would demand from the gods the gift of Midas. We would rather have a dinner of herbs with contentment and a little wine than all the dry banquets which the enslaved riches of the United States can provide.

Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine* (1925).

Ode to the West Wind — By Percy Bysshe Shelley

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Veiled with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumic isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves. O hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet tho' in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguisht hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be thro' my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

The Screen

By RICHARD WASHBURN CHILD

AT ONE end of the room there was a screen. It was framed in black lacquer; it had five panels of thin wood, and in each, upon a gold background, there had been painted, by a famous Oriental artist, a part of the picture of a mountain seen through the branches of pine-trees.

It was now five o'clock, or perhaps a few minutes later. A Japanese man-servant, moving noiselessly, came into the room and put down a tray bearing two porcelain cups and a silver pot and accessories. He then went to the windows.

For a moment he stood looking down from this corner apartment on to the wide avenue where the going-home motor-vehicles moved up-town like a running chain composed of links of varying size. Against the snow their tops were dark in colour—mere moving rectangular figures on the white, and breathing vapours into the cold as if they were possessed of human lungs.

The habit of this Japanese was to always look around. No matter how familiar he might be with a room, he never left it without searching it with his beady eyes, and sometimes even touching articles here and there to be sure that they were real. Having done so now, he nodded as if pleased to find the room empty and satisfying to his discriminating and artistic eye. He drew the curtains and turned on the light.

The interior was a pleasant one, for, although it was provided with furniture and decorations from several countries and from several periods, nevertheless it was spacious; there were not many things in it, and whatever there was represented nothing but fine examples of their kind. The Japanese nodded approvingly to the room as he withdrew, and then as if by afterthought went to the gold screen and rearranged its panels so that they furnished a barrier to any draft from the shaft and fire-escape in the rear.

In the hall of the apartment he was heard addressing a woman who was approaching. "I have served tea. I go now?"

"Yes, Mr. Haig and I are dining out. You need not come back."

The woman who entered, walking through the soft lamplight to the fireplace near the tea-table, where the redder glow of the hearth embers fell upon her gown, was not old. She was one of those whom anyone suspects of appearing even younger than her years. She had rich quantities of glossy brown hair which made a strange contrast to her active blue eyes under their somewhat heavy brows; she had a fine skin of velvety texture, and yet this was not because of sloth and artifice, because the poise of her slight figure and the spring and vitality in every one of her movements made one think of outdoor life and youth and an energetic ancestry. She was young and happy.

She expected some one for tea; there were two cups there. Having looked up, however, at the small clock which she took up in her pointed fingers and turned toward the light, she shook her head, sat down, and poured her own as if she had given up hope of sharing the hospitality of these restful minutes of after-dusk.

As she lifted the cup to her lips for a second draft of the aromatic tea she suddenly raised her chin, half closed her eyes, and remained motionless as one does who desires to concentrate one particular sense upon some incoming sensation. A sudden flow of cold air had struck across the back of her bare neck as one might be touched by the brushing contact of a limp and icy hand.

Slowly she turned around in her chair. The screen with its black-lacquer frame and gold and dark green of pine-branches still covered the window in the rear of the room. It was motionless. It was non-committal. Nevertheless there lingered for a moment the unpleasant impression that the screen had moved. No hand would have been needed for this. Just the opening wide for a moment of the heavy and noiseless window might have admitted enough of the winter wind to move the screen. She reflected, however, that windows do not open and close of their own will, but with another glance at the clock she relaxed once more.

The reason for taking another look at the screen was not quite clear to her, but she did so, and then, humming a bit of song, she put another stick of wood into the flames. Only when she straightened her body did she smell the peculiar faint odour that comes from cigaret-stains on moist, cold fingers.

Again she glanced around the room. She raised her own hands quickly toward her nose, and then, with the calm suddenly collapsing on her face, she turned a whitened, staring face toward the screen.

A white and staring face was thrust out from behind the end panel.

Not enough light fell upon this strange peering face to disclose at once whether it was the face of a man or of a woman. It was w ite. It was long and thin, and dimly howed an expression of a thin coating of anxiety as a veneer over a rather vicious countenance. It was like the cold death-mask of a warped personality.

She expected to hear the words, "Don't move or I will kill you."

She screamed one word, "Kaga!"

This was the name of the Japanese servant, but there was no reply because he had gone.

And then, just as if she were creating events by her expectations, the peering face said, "Don't do that again, or I'll kill you."

"Who are you?" she said through teeth that chattered.

"Huh! So you don't know me, Amy—after all this time?"

"No. Who are you?"

The man came forward—tall, white, long-faced, and with one long-fingered hand drooped down one long black-clad thigh. His gait was mincing and sliding, almost like a little childlike trot. It was like the noiseless trot of Death.

"Its just me—Tark—Tark."

"Tark!" she exclaimed in recognition.

"Look at what I've got here," he said with a low whisper as if she were a fellow conspirator. "I got a weapon. Don't let that frighten you."

He showed her an automatic pistol, black against his white hand.

"I haven't got anything against you, Amy—just against him," he said. "I never thought I'd find you this-a-way."

"You're sick, Tark."

"I've been in Colorado for five years, but I gave it up."

He laughed.

"I thought I'd see your husband before it was too late, eh?"

Her first thoughts directed her eyes at the clock.

"It's about time," he said, following her quick glance with the agility of his own. "I've been watching a bit for a few days so as to fix it just right. He comes home right prompt at five-thirty, eh? But I certainly never expected to see you. I just thought I'd wait for him to come in through that yonder door, eh? I was going to say sharp and harsh, 'Cameron Haig!'—like that, so's he'd see me. Look here. I chilled my hands pretty bad coming up the rungs of that fire-escape, eh?"

"Tark Ridley!" she gasped.

"Yes'm, what's left of Tark Ridley. Maybe I've changed some since I left old Hannibal, Missouri, eh? Why don't you ask me to come up to the fire? I'm all shaky with fever. Yes'm, every afternoon it comes on strong as horse-radish. Lord, what I been through! I bet I look over forty. Let me sit here, eh?"

"Yes—yes," she said eagerly. "Sit down, Tark; sit down."

He put the automatic weapon in his lap and rubbed his spare knees.

In the moments that were given to her to stand trembling before this strange lank figure, all angles in its posture, like a sitting skeleton, she must have gathered all the poise of which her nerve was capable.

"Well, Tark, this is a pretty piece of business—coming here like this," she said reprovingly, in attempt to give lightness to the situation.

He twisted his lips into a ghastly grin.

"I reckon it's onusual," he said. "Like enough nobody'd believe it. Somehow it ain't natural for anything violent to happen to a successful New York engineer right in his peaceful, law-abiding home. But you ain't dreamin', Amy. I was raised from

Tennessee folks. You remember about that when I was a-courtin' you back in old Missouri."

She caught her breath and released it in these words, "But, Tark, you haven't anything against Cameron—against my husband."

He turned his chair around so that he faced the empty doorway, and raised the muzzle of the automatic slightly.

"Wait'n'see," he answered. "Huh! He'll be here soon. He's late to-night, eh?"

Amy Haig stared at the doorway, listening perhaps for the sound of her husband's key in the outer hall.

"I guess you'll scream when you hear him," said Ridley. "But it won't do any good. He'll come rushing in to see what's the matter, eh?"

Amy stared at him as if the devil himself were there reading her thoughts. After a moment the hoarse and whining voice of Tark Ridley began again in a listless monotone.

"I guess maybe you think I'm crazy, eh? But I ain't crazy. You said I hadn't anything against him. Well, I have. You just listen now, Amy and see if I haven't."

"Speak quickly," she said frantically and looked toward the front windows.

Again he knew exactly what she was thinking, for he said, "Don't you try nothing like that, Amy. If you did I'd have to put you into yonder closet, and then where'd your young husband be? I can handle you, Amy, even if I am a gentleman. I'm wiry, I am."

He thrust out one of his long-fingered, bony hands and clenched it so that knuckles and cords grew tense.

"See! Wiry!"

The girl shivered.

"You haven't anything against him," she repeated in a breaking voice.

"I said I have, and I have. I've had time enough to think, eh? See if I'm not right. Weren't you and I pretty close—down there in Hannibal?"

"Yes," said she, indulging him. With an effort she added, "Will you have some tea, Tark? You're shaking."

"Thanks, Amy. That's right nice. Five years ago we were pretty close, eh? Your pa was vice-president of the bank and I was owning a big apple orchard, eh? and pretty prosperous. You know about me, Amy. I was always strange and thoughtful, or leastwise all my folks and relatives said so, and that's what took me out of Tennessee. I could ride and I was a good shot and all, but they said I had a woman's disposition and couldn't git along with none of 'em."

"They were good people," she said.

"I reckon they was. The best in Tennessee! But I was strange, maybe. I never could stay in school. I was too sensitive, they said, Amy."

"Hurry, Tark!" she exclaimed impatiently.

"No, I sha'n't. I ain't in any hurry. I've got till he comes."

"Yes, yes, you were sensitive, I know. You told me—I could see it and you told me, too. You were an only child. Your mother let you get to thinking too much of yourself."

"Yes'm, and dreaming too much, Amy. I always was dreaming and writing down my thoughts. I was sensitive and dramatic. I was always playing at being something I wasn't; I reckon I still do. So you see I'm not crazy."

"Poor Tark!" she said with a momentary flash of sincerity. "I used to feel so sorry for you!"

"You loved me a little!" he said accusingly. "I dragged that out of you once. You were the only one who ever knew what was underneath, eh? And you begun to love me. That's what I can't forget. No girl like you would have let me hold your hand if you hadn't—and all of that."

She shuddered and then protested, "I don't think it was real love, Tark; it was just pity."

"It would have been love if it hadn't been killed, Amy," he said, and then fell into a fit of coughing.

"Well, you killed it then," she said quickly. "It was you, Tark. You frightened me with your talk about love that would outlast death, and how if you should die you would come back, and how if any man took me away from you, you would go up into the highest mountains so as to be near the sky and swear to kill. You killed any love I might have had for you."

"No, I didn't, Amy; he did it."

"No!"

"I say yes, he did. He did! That's my score with him, Amy."

"I'd never have married you, Tark. We wouldn't have been happy. Besides, if you loved me then you'd love me now, and you'd go away—you'd leave now. You haven't any right to torture a woman you love."

He looked at her coldly.

"Maybe I don't love you now, Amy.

Such things burn out after a while. Somebody else might get over it. Well, I did. I had to, Amy. I couldn't stand it. I had to get something else to fill the hole. And I guess it was hate of him, eh?"

"For what? He never did you any harm."

"Yes, he did. Didn't you tell me so once with your own lips? Didn't you say it that last night up on the pine bluff above the river when there was starlight and just the sound of a steamer pulling out from the levee and you was in that yellow-and-white dress and I went away? Didn't you tell me that I'd made a mistake telling you how'd I'd kill anybody who took you away from me, and how it frightened you to hear me always talking like that—like I was crazy; and didn't you tell me you had a friend who'd advised you to send me away. You was kind and nice, but the friend you spoke of was him."

"I hardly knew him then. He'd just come from New York to lay out the drainage work, and he was calm and wise, and I asked him and that was his advice. He'd never seen you, Tark."

"He was planning to get me out of the way," Ridley said, still shivering and all angles like a sitting skeleton.

"No, no, Tark," the girl protested. "He just said that any jealous man—madly jealous—was dangerous—was a dangerous man—vicious or a fool."

The visitor sat a long time staring at her.

"That's what's left of my love for you, Amy. It was the only love I ever had and it meant everything to me. That's what was left—jealousy. It's eaten away most of me. It's what the doctors couldn't find. It got worse and worse. And look a-here——"

He stopped, holding toward her a long cold, white forefinger.

"Why, look a-here, haven't I studied it all out for five years and more? There ain't any love without jealousy, Amy. It's the proof of love. He don't love you enough. If he did he'd be crazy jealous like I was; and even when love had gone, if it had been a big enough love, why, he'd be jealous still."

His head was nodding emphatically so that his nose, long and marble in pallour, pecked away at the air like the ivory beak of some strange bird. It was hard for her to realize that once he had been handsome; that once his eyes were calm and tender; that once his skin had been brown and ruddy with outdoors and health, and his hair thick.

"Why, no!" she said, looking at the clock. It was ten minutes of six. She had abandoned hope of outwitting this murderous pilgrim from the past; she was relying upon an appeal to his reason.

"No, what?" he asked.

"Why, I say that jealousy is wicked, crazy, mad, Tark," she argued. "Cam—my husband——"

"What about him?"

"His love is too great for that."

"It isn't great enough. That's what I say."

"Tark!" she said sharply. "Love is truth between people. It isn't disbelief and doubt. It's faith and complete faith. That's love. No love comes until jealousy is gone." She hesitated. "That's the love he has for me. You couldn't love me like that. He does!"

"I wouldn't kill him if he was a better man than me. What always set me on fire was the thought he couldn't love you like I could, Amy. But I don't think a man who ain't jealous can love, eh?"

"Yes."

"No, Amy. I've thought of that a heap. Somehow all these last few weeks it came down to that. The question was whether he ought to be killed or not, Amy. See how calm I think about it, eh? I certainly do. And it was all straight in my mind till you spoke. You don't mean you'd want a man not to be jealous."

"I'd want perfect faith," she replied. "Absolute and perfect faith, so that jealousy and suspicion would be impossible. Only that would be real love."

"Might be in angels, but it ain't in men," he said. "It takes a big love to kill. I reckon Cameron Haig wouldn't kill for jealousy, eh?"

"He loves me too much for lack of faith—or jealousy."

A look of doubt crept down over the long, grave, white face. Ridley arose and paced up and down, his head thrust forward on a neck so thin that it appeared to be the dried and whitewashed neck of a mummy. His gait was still that same short, sliding shuffle of Death.

"I've always figured this way," he said at last. "If he loves you as much as I could have loved you, then he has a right to you, eh? I came to that decision long ago. And the question is, Does he love you enough to kill because of jealousy? That's one side. And the other side—your side—is that he loves you too much to be suspicious and jealous at all."

"Yes," she said eagerly. "And you can't make up your mind?"

"No. Somehow I never figured on that phase of it."

He looked abashed, embarrassed.

"Then you ought to wait, Tark. You can't kill when you're not sure. You're not yourself. You've thought too much. You're burning with fever."

He looked calmly at her, admiring, without personal interest, her graceful figure, her great frightened eyes, the hair in rich coils, which contrasted so with her unblemished skin, and the curve of her flexible, sensitive lips. Then he smiled in a manner to cause her to draw back as one draws back who has almost stepped upon a snake.

"You're not the kind of man who kills in cold blood, who brings misery and destruction with a coward's shot," she urged. "You wouldn't do it before my very eyes!"

"I don't regard myself as a human being," he answered. "I regard myself like I was Fate and Justice. It hasn't anything to do with cowards or misery. I'm just a hand of Destiny."

"But you want to be right, don't you?"

"Yes'm, Amy. I do."

He spoke with a note of sadness, as if expressing for all humanity its sorrows of misjudgment and error since the world began. He stopped suddenly and listened.

"You think my husband is fit to die just because his love is too great for jealousy?" she asked.

"It ain't too great. It ain't great enough. If he was a man he'd kill—same as I will."

"Perhaps he would," she said frantically. "Perhaps he would."

"You said he wouldn't."

"I was only guessing. Perhaps if he were put to the test——"

She stopped because suddenly the lean and lanky Ridley—that giant skeleton, angled and articulated, beneath the cold white flesh—had thrust his pointed chin outward and raised his hand with the automatic held loosely in his bony fingers. He was listening!

"What?" she asked.

"His key—key in the lock, eh? He's come home."

"For God's sake don't do it, Tark," she begged, trying to get near him to pluck at his sleeve. "You're not yourself. Listen to me!"

"I am myself! Yes, I am too! Get away from me! You want a chance for him, eh? Well, I'll give it. Quick now! Hear what I got to say."

She was stiff with fear. She heard her husband putting his coat on the rack. With tense, agonized face she nodded to the assassin.

"Sit right there," he whispered. "Don't you move. If you do—it's all over, Amy. Keep facing this way. Don't you say a word about me—not my name—nor anything. If you do—I'll drop him down."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going behind that there screen."

"Screen?"

"Yes'm. And if he asks who's behind it and you don't speak up and refuse to tell him—down he goes. You understand? You said test, eh? We'll give him a test! We'll see what he's made of—whether he's fitten' to live."

The steps came down the hall.

Ridley, with his strange, trotting, silent feet, like the feet of Death, crossed the rug and disappeared behind the screen. Suddenly the room seemed cleared of him as if he had never been there. The clock ticked audibly, the fire snapped and crackled, automobile horns sounded below on the avenue, the winter wind slapped sleet against the window-panes. Cameron Haig came in rubbing his hands. He said, "Hello, Amy, dear. All alone?"

"Yes, Cam," she said in a sprightly tone. "Why don't you go and dress for dinner?"

"No kiss? What's the rush?"

He came and put his arms around her shoulders.

"What's the matter, Amy? You're so white! You're trembling!"

"I was rather put out that you didn't come home sooner. I had to have tea—alone."

"Lord, but you are suddenly temperamental! The trouble was that the car froze up. Rather stupid business. At last when Jimmy almost gave up trying to start her, I ducked into the subway. That's all, Amy."

He sat down on the arm of the chair beside her and reached toward the box of cigarets on the little table. His hand stopped half-way.

"Hello!" said he, staring at the table. "Tea? Alone, did you say?"

"Yes."

"Why the two cups, Amy? Both used?"

She imagined that the screen with its horrible gold, its horrible pine-trees, and its horrible mountains gave forth now a leer of triumph.

"Because I——"

"What?"

"Why, I drank two cups. I poured the

second one—why, it was just stupidity, dear."

"You seem all tense."

"It's because of you," she answered. "Go and dress for dinner now."

"Now? It isn't time."

He glanced again at the cups and then all about the room, sweeping into the corners with his quick thrusts of inspection. He ended by staring at the screen.

"Is it cold out?"

"Why, of course," he answered. "Awfully cold."

"What are you thinking about?"

"Why that cup of tea—that second cup. It's extraordinarily suggestive of——"

"What?"

"Why, two people."

"Yes, isn't it?" she said with clenched hands.

Her husband glanced at these white, clenched hands and, jumping up, began to whistle.

"Don't!" she exclaimed.

"Don't what?"

"Don't whistle!"

He looked at her as he turned suddenly back into the light. He was a stalwart person whose face showed lines that come from strong, intense struggle, but there was a boyishness about him whenever he was in repose. That boyishness had suddenly left him.

"Who's been here, Amy?" he asked brusquely.

"Nobody. I expect you to believe me. I think—I wish you'd get me a glass of water."

"There's some right in front of you—ice and all."

She looked at it stupidly.

"Well? What's the use?" he said sternly. "Something's wrong. What is it? Who had that second cup of tea?"

"For the love of Heaven, don't doubt me, Cam—don't doubt me!"

He waved his hand. He said, "Where's Kaga?"

"Gone out."

He grunted.

"You're not going to doubt me, Cam? You're not—are you?"

He appeared to be struggling within. He said at last, "No, Amy."

"Because love is faith, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"And even if some one had been here, you'd know it was all right? Wouldn't you, dear?"

"You mean if you said, 'So-and-so has been here'? And you told me who? Why, of course."

"But if I didn't tell you who, Cam? Suppose it was just a test of your faith—your love? Suppose I said, 'Some one has been here, Cam, but don't ask me to tell you any more; trust in me'? What then?"

"You know I love you," he said fiercely.

"Enough to ask me no questions?"

"But why? Why shouldn't I ask? Don't you see, Amy, how unfair it is to engage in such nonsense? I know some one has been here, Amy. Why shouldn't I know who it is? There couldn't be a reason why I shouldn't know. What reason could there be?"

He was tortured now, and his gestures disclosed it, for they were the motions of a man who twists about to shed pain as one twists about to shed a tight and clinging garment.

"I want you to love me enough to shut your eyes, your thoughts, your questionings—to put my love for you and yours for me above all else—submerging all else."

He looked at the two teacups on the table—a quick glance, but enough to make her regret her falsehood, not because it had been a falsehood, but because she had disclosed to him that at first she had not told the truth. Then he sat near her and put his forehead down into his upturned palms. She was staring straight at the screen, at its field of dull gold, its pine-trees and its snow-capped mountain, at the four cracks between the lacquer-framed panels, at the evil slits that barely concealed an evil eye and the evil, black circle of a pointing gun and the white, long-fingered, bony hand with its twitching muscles.

"For God's sake, Cam! Tell me! Say it!" the words burst out.

He looked at her and smiled. Something in his smile might have given the lie to his words because in it there was cynicism and guile. His voice was kind, gentle, almost tender.

"Yes, I love you enough, Amy," he said. "I leave it to you. Tell me or not. I leave it to you, dear one."

"Shall I tell you?"

"No."

She turned her head slowly and fearfully toward the screen as one turns toward an inexorable judge.

The screen answered as if it had seen the smile upon Cameron Haig's face and had looked deep into his thoughts. There was no question, as Amy knew at once. From behind the screen there sounded faintly the metallic click of some mechanism, and then, so softly that it might have sprung

from her fancy, the sound of a human chuckle ending in a muffled cough, as if a skeleton hand had been clapped over those twisted red lips.

"What are you looking at?" asked her husband.

"Nothing."

He wet his lips and said, "It was your imagination, Amy."

As he stood up stretching his arms as one rising in the morning and yawning, she realized that the spit of fire from the screen, the nasty, darting tongue of flame, the snarl and bark and roar would topple him over on the rug and that a little dark pool would spread out from beneath his flattened body. But she answered him with the volition of surprize.

"My imagination?"

"Yes—that the screen moved."

"Screen!"

"Yes, the screen," he said. "It did not move—though one might have imagined that it moved."

She laughed hysterically.

"We're a bit nervous," her husband said, looking at her with narrowed eyelids.

"No, no, Cam, I'm not nervous."

"I think so. You ought to have—you ought to have a taste of brandy, Amy."

Her nails scratched on the fabric of the chair-arms as she said dully, "We have no brandy, Cam. You know we have no brandy."

"Oh, yes, I've my own secrets, old girl. I've a little stowed away here in the desk."

He turned his back on the screen and walked leisurely toward the old mahogany desk in the corner. When he had pulled out the lower drawer at the side he fumbled within, clattering about among odds and ends.

"Hello!" he said.

"What?"

"It's gone!"

"The brandy?"

"Yes."

"If you had it, no one could have taken it, dear."

"He did!"

"Who?"

"That man."

She darted a look at the screen.

"Ha!"

Her husband had caught her; she knew it. She started to rise and fell back limply, gasping, her arms dangling beside the chair.

"Well, Amy, shall we give him a chance, eh?"

"There's nobody!"

He grinned with an ugly showing of his teeth. She had seen for the first time the rising from within of that universal elemental personality that mankind buries under layer and layer of routine, manners, restraints.

"I'll give him a chance," he said, his face reddened and tense. "You talk to him, Amy. You tell him what I say."

"There's nobody."

"Say to him these words, 'Come out here, you sneaking coward.'"

"No—please! Cam! No!"

He leaned back against the desk, half sitting on it, his hands behind him—still grinning.

"Say it!'

"You don't believe me—there's nobody there."

"Then why not say it?"

"Come out from the screen, you sneaking coward," she said with faltering voice, as if she expected to hear a pistol-shot punctuate each word.

The screen gave forth no sign.

"He's there," said her husband, with his head thrust forward toward the screen. "He's afraid! So that's the kind of man you're shielding, Amy? Why, my God, don't you see—you've *both* confessed now?"

The sentence broke into the hoarseness of agony, the peculiar crackle of one who sees life and happiness crumbling, toppling over, crashing down.

"Trust me, Cam!" she begged.

"All right," he said. "You're on my side, Amy. Shall I kill him?"

"Kill him?"

"With this?"

She twisted her gaze away from the gold and lacquer, and then she saw that her husband had not engaged in his pretended search for brandy in vain. She believed at once he had done the one thing necessary to end him; he held a revolver in his fist, boring the air with it as if finding a way for its muzzle to lengthen out until it would touch the golden screen.

"Come out, you dog!" he roared. "I'll give you a chance. Come out! I'll give you a chance."

The screen was silent.

"Well, Amy, which is the panel—the first, where the white stork is—the second, with the water and the mountain? Is he a tall man, Amy? Shall I allow for his crouching?"

"For God's sake, Cam! He'll——"

"Ha! So you want to save him—you love him, eh? You! My Amy!"

He raised the point of the revolver above

his ear and brought the muzzle down slowly as one at target-practice.

"My Amy," he repeated ironically, and suddenly, in a chaos of passion, he crouched, grinding his teeth together, filled with the fierce and terrible joys of that poised moment.

She shut her eyes.

A single shot crashed into the world of her nerves, tearing some gigantic hole as if her senses had woven a fabric only to wilfully pull it to shreds with a thousand rough claws struck into it at once.

For a moment in the utter stillness that followed she did not dare to look. She could feel in her nostrils the tang of the smoke that had filled the room, and she opened her eyes slowly, in terrible fear.

Her husband was standing quite erect upon the rug, the smoking revolver in his hand. It was not to be believed! Yet there he was, his nostrils snapping with sharp intakes of breath, his eyes following some imaginary line to the screen where a little black hole showed above the mountain's crest—a new decoration on that field of gold.

The screen was quite inexpressive. It gave forth no motion, no sound, no sign. It stood there as it always stood through days of happy life in the home of two young lovers. It said nothing.

Amy knew that it might speak at any second that dipped down and touch their destinies with the tip of a butterfly's wing of time; she knew also that the personality it had assumed might never speak again. She found herself whispering, within, the exact words that her husband was going to say, and he said those exact words.

"What have I done?"

He was brushing his forehead with the back of his left hand, confused, staring at the gold and green of those lacquer-framed panels just as Amy herself stared with unblinking eyes.

Then as if they were those of a messenger sent from far-off worlds through the night, the fingers of the winter cold came and touched her lightly on the bare throat. She felt the almost imperceptible stirring of the air. The smoke of the revolver drifting near the fireplace, swirled, turned from blue to gray, and then began to settle again into swaying planes at the level of her eyes.

Her husband had started toward the screen.

"Wait!" she exclaimed.

"What have I done?" he said, and, clutching the top of the black-lacquer frame, he threw the screen aside. It waltzed about as something human might reel, and, closing its panels, toppled over onto the rug.

Behind it there was nobody; behind it there was nothing.

Tark Ridley had gone as he had come! He had given his mad judgment!

Her husband stood staring stupidly down at the floor where the screen had stood for a moment until a great sob shook him.

"God forgive me!" he said in a trembling voice. "Amy! Amy!"

Running to her, he fell upon his knees, clutching at her forearms.

"Amy, Amy. Do you love me? Tell me you still love me! Tell me you don't blame me! Speak to me, Amy. I was mad with jealousy, dear."

She threw her arms about his neck and held him tight, gazing into nothingness.

At last she said, "Don't ask me to talk now, dear. I never knew you loved me like *that!*"

The Yarn of Mr. Jones

First Mate of the brig *Betsy Jane*, whaler, of Nantucket

"'CAP'N SIMMONS,' says I, 'she blows. Shall I lower?' 'She may blow, Mr. Jones, but I don't see fitten' for to lower.' Then the lookout, he sings down: 'She blows, an' she's a spouter!' 'Cap'n Simmons,' says I, 'she blows an' she's a spouter. Shall I lower?' 'She may blow, Mr. Jones, an' she may be a spouter, but I don't see fitten' for to lower; but if so be's you see fitten' for to lower, Mr. Jones, you may lower,—an' be good blank-blanked to you, Mr. Jones!'

"I lowers, an' when I come in seventy-five foot of her, I says: 'Hold on, boys, for I'm hell with the long harpoon, I am.' Well, I tows her alongside, an' when I come on deck, Cap'n Simmons, he stood in the gangway, an', says he: 'Mr. Jones, you are an officer an' a gentleman. There's rum an' tobaccy in the locker, Mr. Jones, at your sarvice!' Says I, 'Cap'n Simmons, I'm a man as knows his duty, an' does it. All I axes of you, Cap'n Simmons, is a little sevility, an' that of the commonest blank-blanked kind!'"

EDWARD P. MITCHELL (*via* F. HOPKINSON SMITH).

The Adventure of the Kind Mr. Smith

By
WILLIAM J. LOCKE

RISTIDE PUJOL started life on his own account as a *chasseur* in a Nice café—one of those luckless children tightly encased in bottle-green cloth by means of brass buttons, who earn a sketchy livelihood by enduring with cherubic smiles the continuous maledictions of the establishment. There he soothed his hours of servitude by dreams of vast ambitions. He would become the manager of a great hotel—not a contemptible hostelry where commercial travelers and seedy Germans were indifferently bedded, but one of those white palaces where milords (English) and millionaires (American) paid a thousand francs a night for a bedroom and five louis for a glass of beer. Now, in order to derive such profit from the Anglo-Saxon a knowledge of English was indispensable. He resolved to learn the language. How he did so, except by sheer effrontery, taking linguistic toll of frequenters of the café, would be a mystery to anyone unacquainted with Aristide. But to his friends his mastery of the English tongue in such circumstances is comprehensible. To Aristide the impossible was ever the one thing easy of attainment; the possible the one thing he never could achieve. That was the paradoxical nature of the man. Before his days of hunted-little-devildom were over he had acquired sufficient knowledge of English to carry him, a few years later, through various vicissitudes in England, until, fired by new social ambitions and self-educated in a haphazard way, he found himself appointed Professor of French in an academy for young ladies.

One of these days, when I can pin my dragonfly friend down to a plain, unvarnished autobiography, I may be able to trace some chronological sequence in the kaleidoscopic changes in his career. But hitherto, in his talks with me, he flits about from any one date to any other during a couple of decades, in a manner so confusing that for the present I abandon such an attempt. All I know of the date of the episode I am about to chronicle is that it occurred immediately after the termination of his engagement at the academy just mentioned. Somehow, Aristide's history is a category of terminations.

If the head mistress of the academy had herself played dragon at his classes, all would have gone well. He would have made his pupils conjugate irregular verbs, rendered them adepts in the mysteries of the past participle and the subjunctive mood, and turned them out quite innocent of the idiomatic quaintnesses of the French tongue. Bus *dis aliter visum*. The gods always saw wrongheadedly otherwise in the case of Aristide. A weak-minded governess—and in a governess a sense of humour and of novelty is always a sign of a weak mind—played dragon during Aristide's lessons. She appreciated his method, which was colloquial. The colloquial Aristide was jocular. His lessons therefore were a giggling joy from beginning to end. He imparted to his pupils delicious knowledge. *En avez-vous des-z-homards? Oh, les sales bêtes, elles ont du poil aux pattes*, which, being translated is: "Have you any lobsters? Oh, the dirty animals, they have hair on their feet"—a catch phrase which, some years ago, added greatly to the gaiety of Paris, but in which I must confess to seeing no gleam of wit—became the historic property of the school. He recited to them, till they were word-perfect, a music-hall ditty of the early 'eighties—*Sur le bi, sur le banc, sur le bi du bout du banc*, and delighted them with dissertations on Mme. Yvette Guilbert's earlier répertoire. But for him they would have gone to their lives' end without knowing that *pognon* meant money; *rouspétance*, assaulting the police; *thune*, a five-franc piece; and *bouffer*, to take nourishment. He made (according to his own statement) French a living language. There was never a school in Great Britain, the Colonies, or America on which the Parisian accent was so electrically impressed. The retort, *Eh! ta sœur*, was the

purest Montmartre; also *Fich'-moi la paix, mon petit*, and *Tu as un toupet;* and the delectable locution, *Allons étrangler un perroquet* (let us strangle a parrot), employed by Apaches when inviting each other to drink a glass of absinthe, soon became current French in the school for invitations to surreptitious cocoa-parties.

The progress that academy made in a real grip of the French language was miraculous; but the knowledge it gained in French grammar and syntax was deplorable. A certain mid-term examination—the paper being set by a neighbouring vicar—produced awful results. The phrase, "How do you do, dear?" which ought, by all the rules of Stratfordatte-Bowe, to be translated by *Comment vous portez-vous, ma chère?* was rendered by most of the senior scholars, *Eh, ma vieille, ça boulotte?* One innocent and anachronistic damsel, writing on the execution of Charles I, declared that he *cracha dans le panier* in 1649, thereby mystifying the good vicar, who was unaware that "to spit into the basket" is to be guillotined. This wealth of vocabulary was discounted by abject poverty in other branches of the language. No one could give a list of the words in "*al*" that took "*s*" in the plural, no one knew anything at all about the defective verb *échoir*, and the orthography of the school would have disgraced a kindergarten. The head mistress suspected a lack of method in the teaching of M. Pujol, and one day paid his class a surprize visit.

The sight that met her eyes petrified her. The class, including the governess, bubbled and gurgled and shrieked with laughter. M. Pujol, his bright eyes agleam with merriment and his arms moving in frantic gestures, danced about the platform. He was telling them a story—and when Aristide told a story, he told it with the eloquence of his entire frame. He bent himself double and threw out his hands.

"*Il était saoûl comme un porc,*" he shouted.

And then came the hush of death. The rest of the artless tale about the man as drunk as a pig was never told. The head mistress, indignant majesty, strode up the room.

"M. Pujol, you have a strange way of giving French lessons."

"I believe, madame," said he, with a polite bow, "in interesting my pupils in their studies."

"Pupils have to be taught, not interested," said the head mistress. "Will you kindly put the class through some irregular verbs."

So for the remainder of the lesson Aristide, under the freezing eyes of the head mistress, put his sorrowful class through irregular verbs, of which his own knowledge was singularly inexact, and at the end received his dismissal. In vain he argued. Outraged Minerva was implacable. Go he must.

We find him, then, one miserable December evening, standing on the arrival platform of Euston Station (the academy was near Manchester), an unwonted statue of dubiety. At his feet lay his meager valise; in his hand was an enormous bouquet, a useful tribute of esteem from his disconsolate pupils; around him luggage-laden porters and passengers hurried; in front were drawn up the long line of cabs, their drivers' waterproofs glistening with wet; and in his pocket rattled the few paltry coins that, for Heaven knew how long, were to keep him from starvation. Should he commit the extravagance of taking a cab or should he go forth, valise in hand, into the pouring rain? He hesitated.

"*Sacré mille cochons! Quel chien de climat!*" he muttered.

A smart footman standing by turned quickly and touched his hat.

"Beg pardon, sir; I'm from Mr. Smith."

"I'm glad to hear it, my friend," said Aristide.

"You're the French gentleman from Manchester?"

"Decidedly," said Aristide.

"Then, sir, Mr. Smith has sent the carriage for you."

"That's very kind of him," said Aristide.

The footman picked up the valise and darted down the platform. Aristide followed. The footman held invitingly open the door of a cosy brougham. Aristide paused for the fraction of a second. Who was this hospitable Mr. Smith?

"Bah!" said he to himself, "the best way of finding out is to go and see."

He entered the carriage, sank back luxuriously on the soft cushions, and inhaled the warm smell of leather. They started, and soon the pelting rain beat harmlessly against the windows. Aristide looked out at the streaming streets, and, hugging himself comfortably, thanked Providence and Mr. Smith. But who was Mr. Smith? *Tiens*, thought he, there were two little Miss Smiths at the academy; he had pitied them because they had chilblains, freckles, and

perpetual colds in their heads; possibly this was their kind papa. But, after all, what did it matter whose papa he was? He was expecting him. He had sent the carriage for him. Evidently a well-bred and attentive person. And *tiens!* there was even a hot-water can on the floor of the brougham. "He thinks of everything, that man," said Aristide. "I feel I am going to like him."

The carriage stopped at a house in Hampstead, standing, as far as he could see in the darkness, in its own grounds. The footman opened the door for him to alight and escorted him up the front steps. A neat parlour-maid received him in a comfortably-furnished hall and took his hat and great-coat and magnificent bouquet.

Mr. Smith hasn't come back yet from the City, sir; but Miss Christabel is in the drawing-room."

"Ah!" said Aristide. "Please give me back my bouquet."

The maid showed him into the drawing-room. A pretty girl of three-and-twenty rose from a fender-stool and advanced smilingly to meet him.

"Good afternoon, M. le Baron. I was wondering whether Thomas would spot you. I'm so glad he did. You see, neither father nor I could give him any description, for we had never seen you."

This fitted in with his theory. But why Baron? After all, why not? The English loved titles.

"He seems to be an intelligent fellow, mademoiselle."

There was a span of silence. The girl looked at the bouquet, then at Aristide, who looked at the girl, then at the bouquet, then at the girl again.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "will you deign to accept these flowers as a token of my respectful homage?"

Miss Christabel took the flowers and blushed prettily. She had dark hair and eyes and a fascinating, upturned little nose, and the kindest little mouth in the world.

"An Englishman would not have thought of that," she said.

Aristide smiled in his roguish way and raised a deprecating hand.

"Oh, yes, he would. But he would not have had—what you call the cheek to do it."

Miss Christabel laughed merrily, invited him to a seat by the fire, and comforted him with tea and hot muffins. The frank charm of his girl-hostess captivated Aristide and drove from his mind the riddle of his adventure. Besides, think of the Arabian Nights' enchantment of the change from his lonely and shabby bed-sitting room in the Rusholme Road to this fragrant palace with princess and all to keep him company! He watched the firelight dancing through her hair, the dainty play of laughter over her face, and decided that the brougham had transported him to Bagdad instead of Hampstead.

"You have the air of a veritable princess," said he.

"I once met a princess—at a charity bazaar—and she was a most matter-of-fact, businesslike person."

"Bah!" said Aristide. "A princess of a charity bazaar! I was talking of the princess in a fairy-tale. They are the only real ones."

"Do you know," said Miss Christabel, "that when men pay such compliments to English girls they are apt to get laughed at?"

"Englishmen, yes," replied Aristide, "because they think over a compliment for a week, so that by the time they pay it, it is addled, like a bad egg. But we of Provence pay tribute to beauty straight out of our hearts. It is true. It is sincere. And what comes out of the heart is not ridiculous."

Again the girl coloured and laughed. "I've always heard that a Frenchman makes love to every woman he meets."

"Naturally," said Aristide. "If they are pretty. What else are pretty women for? Otherwise they might as well be hideous."

"Oh!" said the girl, to whom this Provençal point of view had not occurred.

"So, if I make love to you, it is but your due."

"I wonder what my fiancé would say if he heard you?"

"Your——?"

"My fiancé! There's his photograph on the table beside you. He is six foot one, and so jealous!" she laughed again.

"The Turk!" cried Aristide, his swiftly-conceived romance crumbling into dust. Then he brightened up. "But when this six feet of muscle and egotism is absent, surely other poor mortals can glean a smile?"

"You will observe that I'm not frowning," said Miss Christabel. "But you must not call my fiancé a Turk, for he's a very charming fellow whom I hope you'll like very much."

Aristide sighed. "And the name of this thrice-blessed mortal?"

Miss Christabel told his name—one Harry Ralston—and not only his name, but, such was the peculiar, childlike charm of Aristide

Pujol, also many other things about him. He was the Honourable Harry Ralston, the heir to a great brewery peerage, and very wealthy. He was a member of Parliament, and but for Parliamentary duties would have dined there that evening; but he was to come in later, as soon as he could leave the House. He also had a house in Hampshire, full of the most beautiful works of art. It was through their common hobby that her father and Harry had first made acquaintance.

"We're supposed to have a very fine collection here." she said, with a motion of her hand.

Aristide looked round the walls and saw them hung with pictures in gold frames. In those days he had not acquired an extensive culture. Besides, who, having before him the firelight gleaming through Miss Christabel's hair, could waste his time over painted canvas? She noted his cursory glance.

"I thought you were a connoisseur?"

"I am," said Aristide, his bright eyes fixed on her in frank admiration.

She blushed again; but this time she rose.

"I must go and dress for dinner. Perhaps you would like to be shown your room?"

He hung his head on one side.

"Have I been too bold, mademoiselle?"

"I don't know," she said. "You see, I've never met a Frenchman before."

"Then a world of undreamed-of homage is at your feet," said he.

A servant ushered him up broad, carpeted staircases into a bedroom such as he had never seen in his life before. It was all curtains and hangings and rugs and soft couches and satin quilts and dainty writing-tables and subdued lights, and a great fire glowed red and cheerful, and before it hung a clean shirt. His poor little toilet apparatus was laid on the dressing-table, and (with a tact which he did not appreciate, for he had, sad to tell, no dress-suit) the servant had spread his precious frock-coat and spare pair of trousers on the bed. On the pillow lay his night-shirt, neatly folded.

"Evidently," said Aristide, impressed by these preparations, "it is expected that I wash myself now and change my clothes, and that I sleep here for the night. And for all that the ravishing Miss Christabel is engaged to her honourable Harry, this is none the less a corner of Paradise."

So Aristide attired himself in his best, which included a white tie and a pair of nearly new brown boots—a long task, as he found that his valise had been spirited away and its contents, including the white tie of ceremony (he had but one), hidden in unexpected drawers and wardrobes—and eventually went downstairs into the drawing-room. There he found Miss Christabel and, warming himself on the hearth rug, a bald-headed, beefy-faced Briton, with little pig's eyes and a hearty manner, attired in a dinner-suit.

"My dear fellow," said this personage, with outstretched hand, "I'm delighted to have you here. I've heard so much about you; and my little girl has been singing your praises."

"Mademoiselle is too kind," said Aristide.

"You must take us as you find us," said Mr. Smith. "We're just ordinary folk, but I can give you a good bottle of wine and a good cigar—it's only in England, you know, that you can get champagne fit to drink and cigars fit to smoke—and I can give you a glimpse of a modest English home. I believe you haven't a word for it in French."

"*Ma foi*, no," said Aristide, who had once or twice before heard this lunatic charge brought against his country. "In France the men all live in cafés, the children are all put out to nurse, and the women, saving the respect of mademoiselle—well, the less said about them the better."

"England is the only place, isn't it?" Mr. Smith declared, heartily. "I don't say that Paris hasn't its points. But after all—the Moulin Rouge and the Folies Bérgères and that sort of thing soon pall, you know—soon pall."

"Yet Paris has its serious side," argued Aristide. "There is always the tomb of Napoleon."

"Papa will never take me to Paris," sighed the girl.

"You shall go there on your honeymoon," said Mr. Smith.

Dinner was announced. Aristide gave his arm to Miss Christabel, and proud not only of his partner, but also of his frock-coat, white tie, and shiny brown boots, strutted into the dining-room. The host sat at the end of the beautifully set table, his daughter on his right, Aristide on his left. The meal began gaily. The kind Mr. Smith was in the best of humours.

"And how is our dear old friend, Jules Dancourt?" he asked.

"*Tiens!*" said Aristide, to himself, "we have a dear friend Jules Dancourt. Wonderfully well," he replied at a venture, "but he suffers terribly at times from the gout."

"So do I, confound it!" said Mr. Smith, drinking sherry.

"You and the good Jules were always sympathetic," said Aristide. "Ah! he has spoken to me so often about you, the tears in his eyes."

"Men cry, my dear, in France," Mr. Smith explained. "They also kiss each other."

"*Ah, mais c'est un beau pays, mademoiselle!*" cried Aristide, and he began to talk of France and to draw pictures of his country which set the girl's eyes dancing. After that he told some of the funny little stories which had brought him disaster at the academy. Mr. Smith, with jovial magnanimity, declared that he was the first Frenchman he had ever met with a sense of humour.

"But I thought, Baron," said he, "that you lived all your life shut up in that old château of yours?"

"*Tiens!*" thought Aristide. "I am still a Baron, and I have an old château."

"Tell me about the château. Has it a fosse and a drawbridge and a Gothic chapel?" asked Miss Christabel.

"Which one do you mean?" inquired Aristide, airily. "For I have two."

When relating to me this Arabian Nights' adventure, he drew my special attention to his astuteness.

His host's eye quivered in a wink. "The one in Languedoc," said he.

Languedoc! Almost Pujol's own country! With entire lack of morality, but with picturesque imagination, Aristide plunged into a description of that non-existent baronial hall. Fosse, drawbridge, Gothic chapel were but insignificant features. It had tourelles, emblazoned gateways, bastions, donjons, barbicans; it had innumerable rooms; in the *salle des chevaliers* two hundred men-at-arms had his ancestors fed at a sitting. There was the room in which François Premier had slept, and one in which Joan of Arc had almost been assassinated. What the name of himself or of his ancestors was supposed to be Aristide had no ghost of an idea. But as he proceeded with the erection of his airy palace he gradually began to believe in it. He invested the place with a living atmosphere; conjured up a staff of family retainers, notably one Marie-Joseph Loufoque, the wizened old major-domo, with his long white whiskers and blue and silver livery. There were also Madeline Mioulles, the cook, and Bernadet the groom, and La Petite Fripette the goose girl. Ah! they should see La Petite Fripette! And he kept dogs and horses and cows and ducks and hens—and there was a great pond whence frogs were drawn to be fed for the consumption of the household.

Miss Christabel shivered. "I should not like to eat frogs."

"They also eat snails," said her father.

"I have a snail farm," said Aristide. "You never saw such interesting little animals. They are so intelligent. If you're kind to them they come and eat out of your hand."

"You've forgotten the pictures," said Mr. Smith.

"Ah! the pictures," cried Aristide, with a wide sweep of his arms. "Galleries full of them. Raphael, Michael Angelo, Wiertz, Reynolds——"

He paused, not in order to produce the effect of a dramatic aposiopesis, but because he could not for the moment remember other names of painters.

"It is a truly historical château," said he.

"I should love to see it," said the girl.

Aristide threw out his arms across the table. "It is yours, mademoiselle, for your honeymoon," said he.

Dinner came to an end. Miss Christabel left the gentlemen to their wine, an excellent port whose English qualities were vaunted by the host. Aristide, full of food and drink and the mellow glories of the castle in Languedoc, and smoking an enormous cigar, felt at ease with all the world. He knew he should like the kind Mr. Smith, hospitable though somewhat insular man. He could stay with him for a week—or a month—why not a year?

After coffee and liqueurs had been served Mr. Smith rose and switched on a powerful electric light at the end of the large room, showing a picture on an easel covered by a curtain. He beckoned to Aristide to join him and, drawing the curtain, disclosed the picture.

"There!" said he. "Isn't it a stunner?"

It was a picture all gray skies and gray water and gray feathery trees, and a little man in the foreground wore a red cap.

"It is beautiful, but indeed it is magnificent!" cried Aristide, always impressionable to things of beauty.

"Genuine Corot, isn't it?"

"Without doubt," said Aristide.

His host poked him in the ribs. "I thought I'd astonish you. You wouldn't believe Gottschalk could have done it. There it is—as large as life and twice as natural. If you or anyone else can tell it from a genuine Corot I'll eat my hat. And all for eight pounds."

Aristide looked at the beefy face and caught a look of cunning in the little pig's eyes.

"Now are you satisfied?" asked Mr. Smith.

"More than satisfied," said Aristide, though what he was to be satisfied about passed, for the moment, his comprehension.

"If it was a copy of an existing picture, you know—one might have understood it—that, of course, would be dangerous—but for a man to go and get bits of various Corots and stick them together like this is miraculous. If it hadn't been for a matter of business principle I'd have given the fellow eight guineas instead of pounds—hanged if I wouldn't! He deserves it."

"He does, indeed,' said Aristide Pujol.

"And now that you've seen it with your own eyes, what do you think you might ask me for it? I suggested something between two and three thousand—shall we say three? You're the owner, you know." Again the process of rib-digging. "Came out of that lustaric château of yours. My eye! you're a holy terror when you begin to talk. You almost persuaded me it was real."

"*Tiens!*" said Aristide to himself. "I don't seem to have a château after all."

"Certainly three thousand," said he, with a grave face.

"That young man thinks he knows a lot, but he doesn't," said Mr. Smith.

"Ah!" said Aristide, with singular laconicism.

"Not a blooming thing," continued his host. "But he'll pay three thousand, which is the principal, isn't it? He's partner in the show, you know, Ralston, Wiggins, and Wix's Brewery"—Aristide pricked up his ears—"and when his doddering old father dies he'll be Lord Ranelagh and come into a million of money."

"Has he seen the picture?" asked Aristide.

"Oh, yes. Regards it as a masterpiece. Didn't Brauneberger tell you of the Lancret we planted on the American?" Mr. Smith rubbed hearty hands at the memory of the iniquity. "Same old game. Always easy. I have nothing to do with the bargaining or the sale. Just an old friend of the ruined French nobleman with the historic château and family treasures. He comes along and fixes the price. I told our friend Harry——"

"Good," thought Aristide. "This is the same Honourable Harry, M.P., who is engaged to the ravishing Miss Christabel."

"I told him," said Mr. Smith, "that it might come to three or four thousand. He jibbed a bit—so when I wrote to you I said two or three. But you might try him with three to begin with."

Aristide went back to the table and poured himself out a fresh glass of his kind host's 1865 brandy and drank it off.

"Exquisite, my dear fellow," said he. "I've none finer in my historic château."

"Don't suppose you have," grinned the host, joining him. He slapped him on the back. "Well," said he, with a shifty look in his little pig's eyes, "let us talk business. What do you think would be your fair commission? You see, all the trouble and invention have been mine. What do you say to four hundred pounds?"

"Five," said Aristide, promptly.

A sudden gleam came into the little pig's eyes.

"Done!" said Mr. Smith, who had imagined that the other would demand a thousand and was prepared to pay eight hundred. "Done!" said he again.

They shook hands to seal the bargain and drank another glass of old brandy. At that moment, a servant, entering, took the host aside.

"Please excuse me a moment," said he, and went with the servant out of the room.

Aristide, left alone, lighted another of his kind host's fat cigars and threw himself into a great leathern arm-chair by the fire, and surrendered himself deliciously to the soothing charm of the moment. Now and then he laughed, finding a certain comicality in his position. And what a charming father-in-law, this kind Mr. Smith!

His cheerful reflections were soon disturbed by the sudden irruption of his host and a grizzled, elderly, foxy-faced gentleman with a white moustache, wearing the ribbon of the Legion of Honour in the buttonhole of his overcoat.

"Here, you!" cried the kind Mr. Smith, striding up to Aristide, with a very red face. "Will you have the kindness to tell me who the devil you are?"

Aristide rose, and, putting his hands behind the tails of his frock-coat, stood smiling radiantly on the hearthrug. A wit much less alert than my irresponsible friend's would have instantly appreciated the fact that the real Simon Pure had arrived on the scene.

"I, my dear friend," said he, "am the Baron de Je ne Sais Plus."

"You're a confounded impostor," spluttered Mr. Smith.

"And this gentleman here to whom I have not had the pleasure of being introduced?" asked Aristide, blandly.

"I am M. Poiron, monsieur, the agent of Messrs. Brauneberger and Compagnie, art dealers, of the Rue Notre Dame des Petits Champs of Paris," said the new-comer, with an air of defiance.

"Ah, I thought you were the Baron," said Aristide.

"There's no blooming Baron at all about it!" screamed Mr. Smith. "Are you Poiron, or is he?"

"I would not have a name like Poiron for anything in the world," said Aristide. "My name is Aristide Pujol, soldier of fortune, at your service."

"How the blazes did you get here?"

"Your servant asked me if I was a French gentleman from Manchester. I was. He said that Mr. Smith had sent his carriage for me. I thought it hospitable of the kind Mr. Smith. I entered the carriage —*et voilà!*"

"Then clear out of here this very minute," said Mr. Smith, reaching forward his hand to the bellpush.

Aristide checked his impulsive action.

"Pardon me, dear host," said he. "It is raining dogs and cats outside. I am very comfortable in your luxurious home. I am here, and here I stay."

"I'm shot if you do," said the kind Mr. Smith, his face growing redder and uglier. "Now, will you go out, or will you be thrown out?"

Aristide, who had no desire whatever to be ejected from this snug nest into the welter of the wet and friendless world, puffed at his cigar, and looked at his host with the irresistible drollery of his eyes.

"You forget, *mon cher ami*," said he, "that neither the beautiful Miss Christabel nor her affianced, the Honourable Harry, M.P., would care to know that the talented Gottschalk got only eight pounds, not even guineas, for painting that three-thousand-pound picture."

"So it's blackmail, eh?"

"Precisely," said Aristide, "and I don't blush at it."

"You infernal little blackguard!"

"I seem to be in congenial company," said Aristide. "I don't think our friend M. Poiron has more scruples than he has right to the ribbon of the Legion of Honour which he is wearing."

"How much will you take to go out? I have a cheque-book handy."

Mr. Smith moved a few steps from the hearthen-rug. Aristide sat down in the arm-chair. An engaging, fantastic imprudence was one of the charms of Aristide Pujol.

"I'll take five hundred pounds," said he, "to stay in."

"Stay in?" Mr. Smith grew apoplectic.

"Yes," said Aristide. "You can't do without me. Your daughter and your servants know me as M. le Baron—by the way, what is my name? And where is my historic château in Languedoc?"

"Mireilles," said M. Poiron, who was sitting grim and taciturn on one of the dining-room chairs. "And the place is the same, near Montpellier."

"I like to meet an intelligent man," said Aristide.

"I should like to wring your infernal neck," said the kind Mr. Smith. "But, by George, if we do let you in you'll have to sign me a receipt implicating yourself up to the hilt. I'm not going to be put into the cart by you, you can bet your life."

"Anything you like," said Aristide, "so long as we all swing together."

Now, when Aristide Pujol arrived at this point in his narrative I, his chronicler, who am nothing if not an eminently respectable, law-abiding Briton, took him warmly to task for his sheer absence of moral sense. His eyes, as they sometimes did, assumed a luminous pathos.

"My dear friend," said he, "have you ever faced the world in a foreign country in December with no character and fifteen pounds five and threepence in your pocket? Five hundred pounds was a fortune. It is now. And to be gained just by lending oneself to a good farce, which didn't hurt anybody. You and your British morals! Bah!" said he, with a fine flourish.

Aristide, after much parleying, was finally admitted into the nefarious brotherhood. He was to retain his rank as the Baron de Mireilles, and play the part of the pecuniarily inconvenienced nobleman forced to sell some of his rare collection. Mr. Smith had heard of the Corot through their dear old common friend, Jules Dancourt of Rheims, had mentioned it alluringly to the Honourable Harry, had arranged for the Baron, who was visiting England, to bring it over and dispatch it to Mr. Smith's house, and on his return from Manchester to pay a visit to Mr. Smith, so that he could meet the Honourable Harry in person. In whatever transaction ensued Mr. Smith, so far as his prospective son-in-law was concerned, was to be the purely disinterested friend. It was Aristide's wit which invented a part for the supplanted M. Poiron. He should be the eminent Parisian

expert who, chancing to be in London, had been telephoned for by the kind Mr. Smith.

"It would not be wise for M. Poiron," said Aristide, chuckling inwardly with puckish glee, "to stay here for the night—or for two or three days—or a week—like myself. He must go back to his hotel when the business is concluded."

"*Mais, pardon!*" cried M. Poiron, who had been formally invited, and had arrived late solely because he had missed his train at Manchester, and come on by the next one. "I cannot go out into the wet, and I have no hotel to go to."

Aristide appealed to his host. "But he is unreasonable, *cher ami*. He must play his *rôle*. M. Poiron has been telephoned for. He can't possibly stay here. Surely five hundred pounds is worth one little night of discomfort? And there are a legion of hotels in London."

"Five hundred pounds!" exclaimed M. Poiron. "*Qu' est-ce que vous chantez là?* I want more than five hundred pounds."

"Then you're jolly well not going to get it," cried Mr. Smith, in a rage. "And as for you"—he turned on Aristide—"I'll wring your infernal neck yet."

"Calm yourself, calm yourself!" smiled Aristide, who was enjoying himself hugely.

At this moment the door opened and Miss Christabel appeared. On seeing the decorated stranger she started with a little "Oh!" of surprise.

"I beg your pardon."

Mr. Smith's angry face wreathed itself in smiles.

"This, my darling, is M. Poiron, the eminent Paris expert, who has been good enough to come and give us his opinion on the picture."

M. Poiron bowed. Aristide advanced.

"Mademoiselle, your appearance is like a mirage in a desert."

She smiled indulgently and turned to her father. "I've been wondering what had become of you. Harry has been here for the last half-hour."

"Bring him in, dear child, bring him in!" said Mr. Smith, with all the heartiness of the fine old English gentlemen. "Our good friends are dying to meet him."

The girl flickered out of the room like a sunbeam (the phrase is Aristide's), and the three precious rascals put their heads together in a hurried and earnest colloquy. Presently Miss Christabel returned, and with her came the Honourable Harry Ralston, a tall, soldierly fellow, with close-cropped fair curly hair and a fair moustache, and frank blue eyes that, even in Parliament, had seen no harm in his fellow creatures. Aristide's magical vision caught him wincing ever so little at Mr. Smith's effusive greeting and overdone introductions. He shook Aristide warmly by the hand.

"You have a beauty there, Baron, a perfect beauty," said he, with the insane ingenuousness of youth. "I wonder how you can manage to part with it."

"*Ma foi*," said Aristide, with his back against the end of the dining-table and gazing at the masterpiece. "I have so many at the Château de Mireilles. When one begins to collect, you know—and when one's grandfather and father have had also the divine mania——"

"You were saying, M. le Baron," said M. Poiron of Paris, "that your respected grandfather bought this direct from Corot himself."

"A commission," said Aristide, "My grandfather was a patron of Corot."

"Do you like it, dear?" asked the Honourable Harry.

"Oh, yes!" replied the girl, fervently. "It is beautiful. I feel like Harry about it." She turned to Aristide. "How can you part with it? Were you really in earnest when you said you would like me to come and see your collection?"

"For me," said Aristide, "it would be a visit of enchantment."

"You must take me, then," she whispered to Harry. "The Baron has been telling us about this lovely old château."

"Will you come, monsieur?" asked Aristide.

"Since I'm going to rob you of your picture," said the young man, with smiling courtesy, "the least I can do is to pay you a visit of apology. Lovely!" said he, going up to the Corot.

Aristide took Miss Christabel, now more bewitching than ever with the glow of young love in her eyes and a flush on her cheek, a step or two aside and whispered:—

"But he is charming, your fiancé! He almost deserves his good fortune."

"Why almost?" she laughed, shyly.

"It is not a man, but a demi-god, that would deserve you, mademoiselle."

M. Poiron's harsh voice broke out.

"You see, it is painted in the beginning of Corot's later manner—it is 1864. There is the mystery which, when he was quite an old man, became a trick. If you were to put it up to auction at Christie's it would fetch, I am sure, five thousand pounds."

"That's more than I can afford to give,"

said the young man, with a laugh. "Mr. Smith mentioned something between three and four thousand pounds. I don't think I can go above three."

"I have nothing to do with it, my dear boy, nothing whatever," said Mr. Smith, rubbing his hands. "You wanted a Corot. I said I thought I could put you on to one. It's for the Baron here to mention his price. I retire now and for ever."

"Well, Baron?" said the young man, cheerfully. "What's your idea?"

Aristide came forward and resumed his place at the end of the table. The picture was in front of him beneath the strong electric light; on his left stood Mr. Smith and Poiron, on his right Miss Christabel and the Honourable Harry.

"I'll not take three thousand pounds for it," said Aristide. "A picture like that! Never!"

"I assure you it would be a fair price," said Poiron.

"You mentioned that figure yourself only just now," said Mr. Smith, with an ugly glitter in his little pig's eyes.

"I presume, gentlemen," said Aristide, "that this picture is my own property." He turned engagingly to his host. "Is it not, *cher ami?*"

"Of course it is. Who said it wasn't?"

"And you, M. Poiron, acknowledge formally that it is mine," he asked, in French.

"*Sans aucun doute.*"

"*Eh bien,*" said Aristide, throwing open his arms and gazing round sweetly. "I have changed my mind. I do not sell the picture at all."

"Not sell it? What the—what do you mean?" asked Mr. Smith, striving to mellow the gathering thunder on his brow.

"I do not sell," said Aristide. "Listen, my dear friends!" He was in the seventh heaven of happiness—the principal man, the star, taking the centre of the stage. "I have an announcement to make to you. I have fallen desperately in love with mademoiselle."

There was a general gasp. Mr. Smith looked at him, red-faced and open-mouthed. Miss Christabel blushed furiously and emitted a sound half between a laugh and a scream. Harry Ralston's eyes flashed.

"My dear sir—" he began.

"Pardon," said Aristide, disarming him with the merry splendour of his glance. "I do not wish to take mademoiselle from you. My love is hopeless! I know it. But it will feed me to my dying day. In return for the joy of this hopeless passion I will not sell you the picture—I give it to you as a wedding present."

He stood, with the air of a hero, both arms extended towards the amazed pair of lovers.

"I give it to you," said he. "It is mine. I have no wish but for your happiness. In my Château de Mireilles there are a hundred others."

"This is madness!" said Mr. Smith, bursting with suppressed indignation, so that his bald head grew scarlet.

"My dear fellow!" said Mr. Harry Ralston. "It is unheard-of generosity on your part. But we can't accept it."

"Then," said Aristide, advancing dramatically to the picture, "I take it under my arm, I put it in a hansom cab. and I go with it back to Languedoc."

Mr. Smith caught him by the wrist and dragged him out of the room.

"You little brute! Do you want your neck broken?"

"Do you want the marriage of your daughter with the rich and Honourable Harry broken?" asked Aristide.

"Oh, damn! Oh, damn! Oh, damn!" cried Mr. Smith, stamping about helplessly and half weeping.

Aristide entered the dining-room and beamed on the company.

"The kind Mr. Smith has consented. Mr. Honourable Harry and Miss Christabel, there is your Corot. And now, may I be permitted?" He rang the bell. A servant appeared.

"Some champagne to drink to the health of the fiancés," he cried. "Lots of champagne."

Mr. Smith looked at him almost admiringly.

"By Jove!" he muttered. "You *have* got a nerve."

"*Voilà!*" said Aristide, when he had finished the story.

"And did they accept the Corot?" I asked.

"Of course. It is hanging now in the big house in Hampshire. I stayed with the kind Mr. Smith for six weeks," he added, doubling himself up in his chair and hugging himself with mirth, "and we became very good friends. And I was at the wedding."

"And what about their honeymoon visit to Languedoc?"

"Alas!" said Aristide. "The morning before the wedding I had a telegram—it was from my old father at Aigues-Mortes—to tell me that the historic Château de Mireilles with my priceless collection of pictures had been burned to the ground."

Doctor Marigold

By CHARLES DICKENS

I AM a Cheap Jack, and my own father's name was Willum Marigold. It was in his life-time supposed by some that his name was William, but my own father always consistently said, No, it was Willum. On which point I content myself with looking at the argument this way: If a man is not allowed to know his own name in a free country, how much is he allowed to know in a land of slavery? As to looking at the argument through the medium of the Register, Willum Marigold come into the world before Registers come up much—and went out of it, too. They wouldn't have been greatly in his line, neither, if they had chanced to come up before him.

I was born on the Queen's highway, but it was the King's at that time. A doctor was fetched to my own mother by my own father, when it took place on a common; and in consequence of his being a very kind gentleman, and accepting no fee but a tea-tray, I was named Doctor, out of gratitude and compliment to him. There you have me. Doctor Marigold.

I am at present a middle-aged man of a broadish build, in cords, leggings, and a sleeved waistcoat, the strings of which is always gone behind. Repair them how you will, they go like fiddle-strings. You have been to the theater, and you have seen one of the wiolin-players screw up his wiolin, after listening to it as if it had been whispering the secret to him that it feared it was out of order, and then you have heard it snap. That's as exactly similar to my waistcoat as a waistcoat and a wiolin can be like one another.

I am partial to a white hat, and I like a shawl round my neck wore loose and easy. Sitting down is my favourite posture. If I have a taste in point of personal jewelry, it is mother-of-pearl buttons. There you have me again, as large as life.

The doctor having accepted a tea-tray, you'll guess that my father was a Cheap Jack before me. You are right. He was. It was a pretty tray. It represented a large lady going along a serpentining up-hill gravel-walk, to attend a little church. Two swans had likewise come astray with the same intentions. When I call her a large lady, I don't mean in point of breadth, for there she fell below my views, but she more than made it up in height; her height and slimness was—in short THE height of both.

I often saw that tray, after I was the innocently smiling cause (or more likely screeching one) of the Doctor's standing it upon a table against the wall in his consulting-room. Whenever my own father and mother were in that part of the country, I used to put my head (I have heard my own mother say it was flaxen curls at that time, though you wouldn't know an old hearth-broom from it now till you come to the handle and found it wasn't me) in at the doctor's door, and the doctor was always glad to see me, and said, "Aha, my brother practitioner! Come in, little M. D. How are your inclinations as to sixpence?"

You can't go on forever, you'll find, nor yet could my father nor yet my mother. If you don't go off as a whole when you are about due, you're liable to go off in part, and two to one your head's the part. Gradually my father went off his, and my mother went off hers. It was in a harmless way, but it put out the family where I boarded them. The old couple, though retired, got to be wholly and solely devoted to the Cheap Jack business, and were always selling the family off. Whenever the cloth was laid for dinner, my father began rattling the plates and dishes, as we do in our

line when we put up crockery for a bid, only he had lost the trick of it, and mostly let 'em drop and broke 'em. As the old lady had been used to sit in the cart, and hand the articles out one by one to the old gentleman on the footboard to sell, just in the same way she handed him every item of the family's property, and they disposed of it in their own imaginations from morning to night. At last the old gentleman, lying bedridden in the same room with the old lady, cries out in the old patter, fluent, after having been silent for two days and nights: "Now here, my jolly companions every one—which the Nightingale club in a village was held, At the sign of the Cabbage and Shears, Where the singers no doubt would have greatly excelled, But for want of taste, voices, and ears—now, here, my jolly companions, every one, is a working model of a used-up old Cheap Jack, without a tooth in his head, and with a pain in every bone; so like life that it would be just as good if it wasn't better, just as bad if it wasn't worse, and just as new if it wasn't worn out. Bid for the working-model of the old Cheap Jack, who has drunk more gunpowder-tea with the ladies in his time than would blow the lid off a washerwoman's copper, and carry it as many thousands of miles higher than the moon as naught nix naught, divided by the national debt, carry nothing to the poor-rates, three under and two over. Now, my hearts of oak and men of straw, what do you say for the lot? Two shillings, a shilling, tenpence, eightpence, sixpence, fourpence. Two pence? Who said two-pence? The gentleman in the scarecrow's hat? I am ashamed of the gentleman in the scarecrow's hat. I really am ashamed of him for his want of public spirit. Now I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Come! I'll throw you in a working model of an old woman that was married to the old Cheap Jack so long ago that upon my word and honour it took place in Noah's Ark, before the Unicorn could get in to forbid the banns by blowing a tune upon his horn. There now! Come! What do you say for both? I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I don't bear you malice for being so backward. Here! If you make me a bid that'll only reflect a little credit on your town, I'll throw you in a warming-pan for nothing, and lend you a toasting-fork for life. Now come; what do you say after that splendid offer? Say two pound, say thirty shillings, say a pound, say ten shillings, say five, say two and six? You don't say even two and six? You say two and three? No. You sha'n't have the lot for two and three. I'd sooner give it you, if you was good-looking enough. Here! Missis! Chuck the old man and woman into the cart, put the horse to, and drive 'em away and bury 'em!" Such were the last words of Willum Marigold, my own father, and they were carried out, by him and by his wife, my own mother, on one and the same day, as I ought to know, having followed as mourner.

My father had been a lovely one in his time at the Cheap Jack work, as his dying observations went to prove. But I top him. I don't say it because it's myself, but because it has been universally acknowledged by all that has had the means of comparison. I have worked at it. I have measured myself against other public speakers—Members of Parliament, Platforms, Pulpits, Counsel learned in the law—and where I have found 'em good, I have took a bit of imagination from 'em and where I have found 'em bad, I have let 'em alone. Now I'll tell you what. I mean to go down into my grave declaring that of all the callings ill-used in Great Britain, the Cheap Jack calling is the worst used. Why ain't we a profession? Why ain't we endowed with privileges? Why are we forced to take out a hawker's license, when no such thing is expected of the political hawkers? Where's the difference betwixt us? Except that we are Cheap Jacks and they are Dear Jacks, *I* don't see any difference but what's in our favour.

For look here! Say it's election time, I am on the footboard of my cart in the market-place on a Saturday night. I put up a general miscellaneous lot. I say: "Now here, my free and independent woters, I'm a-going to give you such a chance as you never had in all your born days, nor yet the days preceding. Now I'll show you what I am a going to do with you. Here's a pair of razors that'll shave you closer than the Board of Guardians; here's a flat-iron worth its weight in gold; here's a frying-pan artificially flavoured with essence of beefsteaks to that degree that you've only got for the rest of your lives to fry bread and dripping in it and there you are replete with animal food; here's a genuine chronometer watch in such a solid silver case that you may knock at the door with it when you come home late from a social meeting, and rouse your wife and family, and save up your knocker for the postman; and here's half a dozen dinner-

plates that you may play the cymbals with to charm the baby when it's fractious. Stop! I'll throw you in another article, and I'll give you that, and it's a rolling-pin; and if the baby can only get it well into its mouth when its teeth is coming and rub the gums once with it, they'll come through double, in a fit of laughter equal to being tickled. Stop again! I'll throw you in another article, because I don't like the looks of you, for you haven't the appearance of buyers unless I lose by you, and because I'd rather lose than not take money to-night, and that's a looking-glass in which you may see how ugly you look when you don't bid! What do you say now? Come! Do you say a pound? Not you, for you haven't got it. Do you say ten shillings? Not you, for you owe more to the tallyman. Well then, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll heap 'em all on the footboard of the cart—there they are! razors, flat-iron, frying-pan, chronometer watch, dinner-plates, rolling-pin, and looking-glass—take 'em all away for four shillings, and I'll give you six-pence for your trouble!" This is me, the Cheap Jack. But on the Monday morning, in the same market-place, comes the Dear Jack on the hustings —*his* cart—and what does *he* say? "Now my free and independent woters, I am a-going to give you such a chance" (he begins just like me) "as you never had in all your born days, and that's the chance of sending Myself to parliament. Now I'll tell you what I am agoing to do for you. Here's the interests of this magnificent town promoted above all the rest of the civilized and uncivilized earth. Here's your railways carried, and your neighbours' railways jockeyed. Here's all your sons in the Post-Office. Here's Britannia smiling on you. Here's the eyes of Europe on you. Here's uniwersal prosperity for you, repletion of animal food, golden cornfields, gladsome homesteads, and rounds of applause from your own hearts, all in one lot, and that's myself. Will you take me as I stand? You won't? Well, then I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Come now! I'll throw you in anything you ask for. There! Church-rates, abolition of church-rates, more malt tax, no malt tax, uniwersal education to the highest mark, or uniwersal ignorance to the lowest, total abolition of flogging in the army or a dozen for every private once a month all round. Wrongs of Men or Rights of Women—only say which it shall be, take 'em or leave 'em, and I'm of your opinion altogether, and the lot's your own on your own terms. There! You won't take it yet! Well, then I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Come! You *are* such free and independent woters, and I *am* so proud of you,—you *are* such a noble and enlightened constituency,—and I *am* so ambitious of the honour and dignity of being your member, which is by far the highest level to which the wings of the human mind can soar,—that I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll throw you in all the public houses in your magnificent town for nothing. Will that content you? It won't? You won't take the lot yet? Well, then, before I put the horse in and drive away, and make the offer to the next most magnificent town that can be discovered, I'll tell you what I'll do. Take the lot, and I'll drop two thousand pound in the streets of your magnificent town for them to pick up that can. Not enough? Now look here. This is the very furthest that I'm agoing to. I'll make it two thousand five hundred. And still you won't? Here, missis! Put the horse—no, stop half a moment, I shouldn't like to turn my back upon you neither for a trifle. I'll make it two thousand seven hundred and fifty pound. There! Take the lot on your own terms, and I'll count out two thousand seven hundred and fifty pound on the footboard of the cart, to be dropped in the streets of your magnificent town for them to pick up that can. What do you say? Come now! You won't do better, and you may do worse. You take it! Hooray! Sold again and got the seat!"

These Dear Jacks soap the people shameful, but we Cheap Jacks don't. We tell 'em the truth about themselves to their faces, and scorn to court 'em. As to wenturesomeness in the way of puffing up the lots, the Dear Jacks beat us hollow. It is considered in the Cheap Jack calling, that better patter can be made out of a gun than any article we put up from the cart, except a pair of spectacles. I often hold forth about a gun for a quarter of an hour, and feel as if I need never leave off. But when I tell 'em what the gun can do, and what the gun has brought down, I never go half so far as the Dear Jacks do when they make speeches in praise of their guns,—their great guns that set 'em on to do it. Besides, I'm in business for myself; I ain't sent down into the market-place to order, as they are. Besides, again, my guns don't know what I say in their laudation, and their guns do, and the whole concern of 'em have reason to be sick and ashamed

all round. These are some of my arguments for declaring that the Cheap Jack calling is treated ill in Great Britain, and for turning warm when I think of the other Jacks in question setting themselves up to pretend to look down upon it.

I courted my wife from the footboard of the cart. I did indeed. She was a Suffolk young woman, and it was in Ipswich market-place right opposite the corn-chandler's shop. I had noticed her up at a window last Saturday that was, appreciating highly. I had took to her, and I had said to myself, "If not already disposed of, I'll have that lot." Next Saturday that come, I pitched the cart on the same pitch, and I was in very high feather indeed, keeping 'em laughing the whole of the time, and getting off the goods briskly. At last I took out of my waistcoat-pocket a small lot wrapped in soft paper, and I put it this way (looking up at the window where she was). "Now here, my blooming English maidens, is an article, the last article of the present evening's sale, which I offer to only you, the lovely Suffolk Dumplings biling over with beauty, and I won't take a bid of a thousand pounds for from any man alive. Now what is it? Why, I'll tell you what it is. It's made of fine gold, and it's not broke, though there's a hole in the middle of it, and it's stronger than any fetter that ever was forged, though it's smaller than any finger in my set of ten. Why ten? Because, when my parents made over my property to me, I tell you true, there was twelve sheets, twelve towels, twelve table-cloths, twelve knives, twelve forks, twelve table-spoons, and twelve teaspoons, but my set of fingers was two short of a dozen, and could never since be matched. Now what else is it? Come, I'll tell you. It's a hoop of solid gold, wrapped in a silver curl-paper that I myself took off the shining locks of the ever beautiful old lady in Threadneedle Street, London City; I wouldn't tell you so if I hadn't the paper to show, or you mightn't believe it even of me. Now what else is it? It's a man-trap and a handcuff, the parish stocks and a leglock, all in gold and all in one. Now what else is it? It's a wedding-ring. Now I'll tell you what I'm agoing to do with it. I'm not agoing to offer this lot for money; but I mean to give it to the next of you beauties that laughs, and I'll pay her a visit to-morrow morning at exactly half after nine o'clock as the chimes go, and I'll take her out for a walk to put up the banns." *She* laughed, and got the ring handed up to her. When I called in the morning, she says, "O dear! It's never you, and you never mean it?" "It's ever me," says I, "and I am ever yours, and I ever mean it." So we got married, after being put up three times,—which, by the bye, is quite in the Cheap Jack way again, and shows once more how the Cheap Jack customs pervade society.

She wasn't a bad wife, but she had a temper. If she could have parted with that one article at a sacrifice, I wouldn't have swopped her away in exchange for any other woman in England. Not that I ever did swop her away, for we lived together till she died, and that was thirteen year. Now, my lords and ladies and gentlefolks all, I'll let you into a secret, though you won't believe it. Thirteen year of temper in a Palace would try the worst of you, but thirteen year of temper in a Cart would try the best of you. You are kept so very close to it in a cart, you see. There's thousands of couples among you getting on like sweet ile upon a whetstone in houses five and six pairs of stairs high, that would go to the Divorce Court in a cart. Whether the jolting makes it worse, I don't undertake to decide; but in a cart it does come home to you, and stick to you. Wiolence in a cart is so wiolent, and aggrawation in a cart is *so* aggrawating.

We might have had such a pleasant life! A roomy cart, with the large goods hung outside, and the bed slung underneath it when on the road, an iron pot and a kettle, a fireplace for the cold weather, a chimney for the smoke, a hanging shelf and a cupboard, a dog, and a horse. What more do you want? You draw off upon a bit of turf in a green lane or by the roadside, you hobble your old horse and turn him grazing, you light your fire upon the ashes of the last visitors, you cook your stew, and you wouldn't call the Emperor of France your father. But have a temper in the cart, flinging language and the hardest goods in stock at you, and where are you then? Put a name to your feelings.

My dog knew as well when she was on the turn as I did. Before she broke out, he would give a howl, and bolt. How he knew it, was a mystery to me; but the sure and certain knowledge of it would wake him up out of his soundest sleep, and he would give a howl, and bolt. At such times I wished I was him.

The worst of it was, we had a daughter born to us, and I love children with all my heart. When she was in her furies, she beat the child. This got to be so shocking.

as the child got to be four or five year old, that I have many a time gone on with my whip over my shoulder, at the old horse's head, sobbing and crying worse than ever little Sophy did. For how could I prevent it? Such a thing is not to be tried with such a temper—in a cart—without coming to a fight. It's in the natural size and formation of a cart to bring it to a fight. And then the poor child got worse terrified than before, as well as worse hurt generally, and her mother made complaints to the next people we lighted on, and the word went round, "Here's a wretch of a Cheap Jack been abeating his wife."

Little Sophy was such a brave child! She grew to be quite devoted to her poor father, though he could do so little to help her. She had a wonderful quantity of shining dark hair, all curling natural about her. It is quite astonishing to me now, that I didn't go tearing mad when I used to see her run from her mother before the cart, and her mother catch her by this hair, and pull her down by it, and beat her.

Such a brave child I said she was! Ah! with reason.

"Don't you mind next time, father dear," she would whisper to me, with her little face still flushed, and her bright eyes still wet; "if I don't cry out, you may know I am not much hurt. And even if I do cry out, it will only be to get mother to let go and leave off." What I have seen the little spirit bear—for me—without crying out!

Yet in other respects her mother took great care of her. Her clothes were always clean and neat, and her mother was never tired of working at 'em. Such is the inconsistency in things. Our being down in the marsh country in unhealthy weather, I consider the cause of Sophy's taking bad low fever; but however she took it, once she got it she turned away from her mother forevermore, and nothing would persuade her to be touched by her mother's hand. She would shiver and say, "No, no, no," when it was offered at, and would hide her face on my shoulder, and hold me tighter round the neck.

The Cheap Jack business had been worse than ever I had known it, what with one thing and what with another (and not least what with railroads, which will cut it all to pieces, I expect, at last), and I was run dry of money. For which reason, one night at that period of little Sophy's being so bad, either we must have come to a deadlock for victuals and drink, or I must have pitched the cart as I did.

I couldn't get the dear child to lie down or leave go of me, and indeed I hadn't the heart to try, so I stepped out on the footboard with her holding round my neck. They all set up a laugh when they see us, and one chuckle-headed Joskin (that I hated for it) made the bidding, "Tuppence for her!"

"Now, you country boobies," says I, feeling as if my heart was a heavy weight at the end of a broken sash-line, "I give you notice that I am agoing to charm the money out of your pockets, and to give you so much more than your money's worth that you'll only persuade yourselves to draw your Saturday night's wages ever again arterwards by the hopes of meeting me to lay 'em out with, which you never will, and why not? Because I've made my fortune by selling my goods on a large scale for seventy-five per cent. less than I give for 'em, and I am consequently to be elevated to the Houss of Peers next week, by the title of the Duke of Cheap and Markis Jackaloorul. Now let's know what you want to-night, and you shall have it. But first of all, shall I tell you why I have got this little girl round my neck? You don't want to know? Then you shall. She belongs to the Fairies. She's a fortune-teller. She can tell me all about you in a whisper, and can put me up to whether you're agoing to buy a lot or leave it. Now do you want a saw? No, she says you don't, because you're too clumsy to use one. Else here's a saw which would be a lifelong blessing to a handy man, at four shillings, at three-and-six, at three, at two-and-six, at two, at eighteen-pence. But none of you shall have it at any price, on account of your well-known awkwardness, which would make it manslaughter. The same objection applies to this set of three planes which I won't let you have neither, so don't bid for 'em. Now I am agoing to ask her what you do want." (Then I whispered, "Your head burns so that I am afraid it hurts you bad, my pet," and she answered, without opening her heavy eyes, "Just a little, father.") "Oh! This little fortune-teller says it's a memorandum-book you want. Then why didn't you mention it? Here it is. Look at it. Two hundred superfine hot-pressed wire-wove pages—if you don't believe me, count 'em—ready ruled for your expenses, an everlastingly pointed pencil to put 'em down with, a double-bladed penknife to scratch 'em out with, a book of printed tables to calculate your income with, and a camp-stool to sit

down upon while you give your mind to it! Stop! And an umbrella to keep the moon off when you give your mind to it on a pitch-dark night. Now I won't ask you how much for the lot, but how little? How little you are thinking of? Don't be ashamed to mention it, because my fortune-teller knows already." (Then making believe to whisper, I kissed her, and she kissed me.) "Why, she says, you're thinking of as little as three and threepence! I couldn't have believed it, even of you, unless she told me. Three and threepence! And a set of printed tables in the lot that'll calculate your income up to forty thousand a year! With an income of forty thousand a year, you grudge three and sixpence. Well then, I'll tell you my opinion. I so despise the threepence that I'd sooner take three shillings. There. For three shillings, three shillings, three shillings! Gone. Hand 'em over to the lucky man."

As there had been no bid at all, everybody looked about and grinned at everybody, while I touched little Sophy's face, and asked her if she felt faint or giddy. "Not very, father. It will soon be over." Then turning from the pretty, patient eyes, which were opened now, and seeing nothing but grins across my lighted greasepot, I went on again in my Cheap Jack style. "Where's the butcher?" (my sorrowful eye had just caught sight of a fat young butcher on the outside of the crowd.) "She says the good luck is the butcher's. Where is he?" Everybody handed on the blushing butcher to the front, and there was a roar, and the butcher felt obliged to put his hand in his pocket, and take the lot. The party so picked out, in general, does feel obliged to take the lot,—good four times out of six. Then we had another lot, the counterpart of that one, and sold it sixpence cheaper, which is always wery much enjoyed. Then we had the spectacles. It ain't a special profitable lot, but I put 'em on, and I see what the Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to take off the taxes, and I see what the sweetheart of the young woman in the shawl is doing at home, and I see what the Bishops has got for dinner, and a deal more that seldom fails to fetch 'em up in their spirits; and the better their spirits the better their bids. Then we had the ladies' lot,—the teapot, tea-caddy, glass sugar-basin, half a dozen spoons, and a caudle-cup,—and all the time I was making similar excuses to give a look or two and say a word or two to my poor child. It was while the second ladies' lot was holding 'em enchained that I felt her lift herself a little on my shoulder to look across the dark street. "What troubles you, darling?" "Nothing troubles me, father. I am not at all troubled. But don't I see a pretty churchyard over there?" "Yes, my dear." "Kiss me twice, dear father, and lay me down to rest upon that churchyard grass so soft and green." I staggered back into the cart with her head dropped on my shoulder, and I says to her mother, "Quick. Shut the door! Don't let those laughing people see!" "What's the matter?" she cries. "O woman, woman," I tells her, "you'll never catch my little little Sophy by her hair again, for she has flown away from you!"

Maybe those were harder words than I meant 'em; but from that time forth my wife took to brooding, and would sit in the cart or walk beside it hours at a stretch, with her arms crossed and her eyes looking on the ground. When her furies took her (which was rather seldomer than before) they took her in a new way, and she banged herself about to that extent that I was forced to hold her. She got none the better for a little drink now and then, and through some years I used to wonder, as I plodded along at the old horse's head, whether there was many carts upon the road that held so much dreariness as mine, for all my being looked up to as the King of the Cheap Jacks. So sad our lives went on till one summer evening, when, as we were coming into Exeter out of the farther West of England, we saw a woman beating a child in a cruel manner, who screamed, "Don't beat me! O mother, mother, mother!" Then my wife stopped her ears, and ran away like a wild thing, and next day she was found in the river.

Me and my dog were all the company left in the cart now; and the dog learned to give a short bark when they wouldn't bid, and to give another and a nod of his head when I asked him, "Who said half a crown? Are you the gentleman sir, that offered half a crown?" He attained to an immense height of popularity, and I shall always believe taught himself entirely out of his own head to growl at any person in the crowd that bid as low as sixpence. But he got to be well on in years, and one night when I was conwulsing York with the spectacles, he took a conwulsion on his own account upon the very footboard by me, and it finished him.

Being naturally of a tender turn, I had

dreadful lonely feelings on me arter this. I conquered 'em at selling times, having a reputation to keep (not to mention keeping myself), but they got me down in private, and rolled upon me. That's often the way with us public characters. See us on the footboard, and you'd give pretty well anything you possess to be us. See us off the footboard, and you'd add a trifle to be off your bargain. It was under those circumstances that I come acquainted with a giant. I might have been too high to fall into conversation with him, had it not been for my lonely feelings. For the general rule is, going round the country, to draw the line at dressing up. When a man can't trust his getting a living to his undisguised abilities, you consider him below your sort. And this giant when on view figured as a Roman.

He was a languid young man, which I attribute to the distance betwixt his extremities. He had a little head and less in it, he had weak eyes and weak knees, and altogether you couldn't look at him without feeling that there was greatly too much of him both for his joints and his mind. But he was an amiable though timid young man (his mother let him out, and spent the money), and we come acquainted when he was walking to ease the horse betwixt two fairs. He was called Rinaldo di Velasco, his name being Pickleson.

This giant, otherwise Pickleson, mentioned to me under the seal of confidence that, beyond his being a burden to himself his life was made a burden to him by the cruelty of his master towards a stepdaughter who was deaf and dumb. Her mother was dead, and she had no living soul to take her part, and was used most hard. She traveled with his master's caravan only because there was nowhere to leave her, and this giant, otherwise Pickleson, did go so far as to believe that his master often tried to lose her. He was such a very languid young man, that I don't know how long it didn't take him to get this story out, but it passed through his defective circulation to his top extremity in course of time.

When I heard this account from the giant, otherwise Pickleson, and likewise that the poor girl had beautiful long dark hair, and was often pulled down by it and beaten, I couldn't see the giant through what stood in my eyes. Having wiped 'em, I gave him a sixpence (for he was kept as short as he was long), and he laid it out in two threepenn'orths of gin-and-water which so brisked him up, that he sang the Favourite Comic of Shivery Shakey, ain't it cold?—a popular effect which his master had tried every other means to get out of him as a Roman wholly in vain.

His master's name was Mim, a wery hoarse man, and I knew him to speak to. I went to that Fair as a mere civilian, leaving the cart outside the town, and I looked about the back of the Vans while the performing was going on, and at last, sitting dozing against a muddy-cart-wheel, I come upon the poor girl who was deaf and dumb. At the first look I might almost have judged that she had escaped from the Wild Beast Show; but at the second I thought better of her, and thought that if she was more cared for and more kindly used she would be like my child. She was just the same age that my own daughter would have been, if her pretty head had not fell down upon my shoulder that unfortunate night.

To cut it short, I spoke confidential to Mim while he was beating the gong outside betwixt two lots of Pickleson's publics, and I put it to him, "She lies heavy on your own hands; what'll you take for her?" Mim was a most ferocious swearer. Suppressing that part of his reply which was much the longest part, his reply was "A pair of braces." "Now I'll tell you," says I, "what I'm going to do with you. I'm going to fetch you half a dozen pair of the primest braces in the cart, and then to take her away with me." Says Mim (again ferocious), "I'll believe it when I've got the goods, and no sooner." I made all the haste I could, lest he should think twice of it and the bargain was completed, which Pickleson he was hereby so relieved in his mind that he come out at his little back door, longways like a serpent, and give us Shivery Shakey in a whisper among the wheels at parting.

It was happy days for both of us when Sophy and me began to travel in the cart. I at once gave her the name of Sophy, to put her ever towards me in the attitude of my own daughter. We soon made out to begin to understand one another, through the goodness of the Heavens, when she knowed that I meant true and kind by her. In a very little time she was wonderful fond of me. You have no idea what it is to have anybody wonderful fond of you, unless you have been got down and rolled upon by the lonely feelings that I have mentioned as having once got the better of me.

You'd have laughed—or the rewerse—

it's according to your disposition—if you could have seen me trying to teach Sophy. At first I was helped—you'd never guess by what—milestones. I got some large alphabets in a box, all the letters separate on bits of bone, and say we was going to WINDSOR, I give her those letters in that order, and then at every milestone I showed her those same letters in that same order again, and pointed towards the abode of royalty. Another time I give her CART, and then chalked the same upon the cart. Another time I give her DOCTOR MARIGOLD, and hung a corresponding inscription outside my waistcoat. People that met us might stare a bit and laugh, but what did *I* care, if she caught the idea? She caught it after long patience and trouble, and then we did begin to get on swimmingly, I believe you! At first she was a little given to consider me the cart, and the cart the abode of royalty, but that soon wore off.

We had our signs, too, and they was hundreds in number. Sometimes she would sit looking at me and considering hard how to communicate with me about something fresh,—how to ask me what she wanted explained,—and then she was (or I thought she was; what does it signify?) so like my child with those years added to her, that I half believed it was herself, trying to tell me where she had been to up in the skies, and what she had seen since that unhappy night when she flied away. She had a pretty face, and now that there was no one to drag at her bright dark hair, and it was all in order, there was a something touching in her looks that made the cart most peaceful and most quiet, though not at all melancholy. [N. B. In the Cheap Jack patter, we generally sound it lemonjolly, and it gets a laugh.]

The way she learnt to understand any look of mine was truly surprizing. When I sold of a night, she would sit in the cart unseen by them outside, and would give a eager look into my eyes when I looked in, and would hand me straight the precise article or articles I wanted. And then she would clap her hands, and laugh for joy. And as for me, seeing her so bright, and remembering what she was when I first lighted on her, starved and beaten and ragged, leaning asleep against the muddy cart-wheel, it give me such heart that I gained a greater heighth of reputation than ever, and I put Pickleson down (by the name of Mim's Traveling Giant, otherwise Pickleson) for a fypunnote in my will.

This happiness went on in the cart till she was sixteen year old. By which time I began to feel not satisfied that I had done my whole duty by her, and to consider that she ought to have better teaching than I could give her. It drew a many tears on both sides when I commenced explaining my views to her; but what's right is right, and you can't neither by tears nor laughter do away with its character.

So I took her hand in mine, and I went with her one day to the Deaf and Dumb Establishment in London, and when the gentleman come to speak to us, I says to him: "Now I'll tell you what I'll do with you, sir. I am nothing but a Cheap Jack, but of late years I have laid by for a rainy day notwithstanding. This is my only daughter (adopted), and you can't produce a deafer nor a dumber. Teach her the most that can be taught her in the shortest separation that can be named,—state the figure for it,—and I am game to put the money down. I won't bate you a single farthing, sir, but I'll put down the money here and now, and I'll thankfully throw you in a pound to take it. There!" The gentleman smiled, and then, "Well, well," says he, "I must first know what she has learned already. How do you communicate with her?" Then I showed him, and she wrote in printed writing many names of things and so forth; and we held some sprightly conversation, Sophy and me, about a little story in a book which the gentleman showed her, and which she was able to read. "This is most extraordinary," says the gentleman; "is it possible that you have been her only teacher?" "I have been her only teacher, sir," I says, "besides herself." "Then," says the gentleman, and more acceptable words was never spoke to me, "you're a clever fellow, and a good fellow." This he makes known to Sophy, who kisses his hands, claps her own, and laughs and cries upon it.

We saw the gentleman four times in all, and when he took down my name and asked how in the world it ever chanced to be Doctor, it come out that he was own nephew by the sister's side, if you'll believe me, to the very doctor that I was called after. This made our footing still easier, and he says to me:—

"Now, Marigold, tell me what more do you want your adopted daughter to know?"

"I want her, sir, to be cut off from the world as little as can be, considering her deprivations, and therefore to be able to read whatever is wrote with perfect ease and pleasure."

"My good fellow," urges the gentleman, opening his eyes wide, "why, *I* can't do that myself!"

I took his joke, and give him a laugh (knowing by experience how flat you fall without it), and I mended my words accordingly.

"What do you mean to do with her afterwards?" asks the gentleman, with a sort of a doubtful eye. "To take her about the country?"

"In the cart, sir, but only in the cart. She will live a private life, you understand, in the cart. I should never think of bringing her infirmities before the public. I wouldn't make a show for any money."

The gentleman nodded and seemed to approve.

"Well," says he, "can you part with her for two years?"

"To do her that good,—yes, sir."

"There's another question," says the gentleman, looking towards her—"can she part with you for two years?"

I don't know that it was a harder matter of itself (for the other was hard enough to me), but it was harder to get over. However, she was pacified to it at last, and the separation betwixt us was settled. How it cut up both of us when it took place, and when I left her at the door in the dark of an evening, I don't tell. But I know this: remembering that night, I shall never pass that same establishment without a heartache and a swelling in the throat; and I couldn't put you up the best of lots in sight of it with my usual spirit,—no, not even the gun, nor the pair of spectacles,—for five hundred pound reward from the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and throw in the honour of putting my legs under his mahogany afterwards.

Still, the loneliness that followed in the cart was not the old loneliness, because there was a term put to it, however long to look forward to; and because I could think, when I was anyways down, that she belonged to me and I belonged to her. Always planning for her coming back, I bought in a few months' time another cart, and what do you think I planned to do with it? I'll tell you. I planned to fit it up with shelves and books for her reading, and to have a seat in it where I could sit and see her read, and think that I had been her first teacher. Not hurrying over the job, I had the fittings knocked together in contriving ways under my own inspection, and here was her bed in a berth with curtains, and there was her reading-table, and here was her writing-desk, and elsewhere was her books in rows upon rows, picters and no picters, bindings and no bindings, gilt-edged and plain, just as I could pick 'em up for her in lots up and down the country, North and South and West and East, Winds liked best and winds liked least, Here and there and gone astray, Over hills and far away. And when I had got together pretty well as many books as the cart would neatly hold, a new scheme come into my head, which, as it turned out, kept my time and attention a good deal employed, and helped me over the two years' stile.

Without being of an awaricious temper, I like to be the owner of things. I shouldn't wish, for instance, to go partners with yourself in the Cheap Jack cart. It's not that I mistrust you, but that I'd rather know it was mine. Similarly, very likely you'd rather know it was yours. Well! A kind of a jealousy began to creep into my mind when I reflected that all those books would have been read by other people long before they was read by her. It seemed to take away from her being the owner of 'em like. In this way, the question got into my head: Couldn't I have a book new-made express for her, which she should be the first to read?"

It pleased me, that thought did; and as I never was a man to let a thought sleep (you must wake up all the whole family of thoughts you've got and burn their night-caps, or you won't do in the Cheap Jack line), I set to work at it. Considering that I was in the habit of changing so much about the country, and that I should have to find out a literary character here to make a deal with, and another literary character there to make a deal with, as opportunities presented, I hit on the plan that this same book should be a general miscellaneous lot,—like the razors, flat-iron, chronometer watch, dinner-plates, rolling-pin, and looking-glass,—and shouldn't be offered as a single individual article, like the spectacles or the gun. When I had come to that conclusion, I come to another, which shall likewise be yours.

Often had I regretted that she never had heard me on the footboard, and that she never could hear me. It ain't that *I* am vain, but that *you* don't like to put your own light under a bushel. What's the worth of your reputation, if you can't convey the reason for it to the person you most wish to value it? Now I'll put it to you. Is it worth sixpence, fippence, fourpence, threepence, twopence, a penny, a half-

penny, a farthing? No, it ain't. Not worth a farthing. Very well, then. My conclusion was that I would begin her book with some account of myself. So that, through reading a specimen or two of me on the footboard, she might form an idea of my merits there. I was aware that I couldn't do myself justice. A man can't write his eye (at least *I* don't know how to), nor yet can a man write his voice, nor the rate of his talk, nor the quickness of his action, nor his general spicy way. But he can write his turns of speech, when he is a public speaker,—and indeed I have heard that he very often does, before he speaks 'em.

Well! Having formed that resolution, then come the question of a name. How did I hammer that hot iron into shape? This way. The most difficult explanation I had ever had with her was, how I come to be called Doctor, and yet was no Doctor. After all, I felt that I had failed of getting it correctly into her mind, with my utmost pains. But trusting to her improvement in the two years, I thought that I might trust to her understanding it when she should come to read it as put down by my own hand. Then I thought I would try a joke with her and watch how it took, by which of itself I might fully judge of her understanding it. We had first discovered the mistake we had dropped into, through her having asked me to prescribe for her when she had supposed me to be a Doctor in a medical point of view; so thinks I, "Now, if I give this book the name of my Prescriptions, and if she catches the idea that my only Prescriptions are for her amusement and interest,—to make her laugh in a pleasant way, or to make her cry in a pleasant way,—it will be a delightful proof to both of us that we have got over our difficulty." It fell out to absolute perfection. For when she saw the book, as I had it got up,—the printed and pressed book,—lying on her desk in her cart, and saw the title "Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions," she looked at me for a moment with astonishment, then fluttered the leaves, then broke out alaughing in the charmingest way, then felt her pulse and shook her head, then turned the pages pretending to read them most attentive, then kissed the book to me, and put it to her bosom with both her hands. I never was better pleased in all my life!

But let me not anticipate. (I take that expression out of a lot of romances I bought for her. I never opened a single one of 'em—and I have opened many—but I found the romancer saying "let me not anticipate." Which being so, I wonder why he did anticipate, or who asked him to it). Let me not, I say, anticipate. This same book took up all my spare time. It was no play to get the other articles together in the general miscellaneous lot, but when it come to my own article! There! I couldn't have believed the blotting, nor yet the buckling to at it, nor the patience over it. Which again is like the footboard. The public have no idea.

At last it was done, and the two years' time was gone after all the other time before it, and where it's all gone to, who knows? The new cart was finished,—yellow outside, relieved with wermilion and brass fittings,—the old horse was put in it, a new 'un and a boy being laid on for the Cheap Jack cart,—and I cleaned myself up to go and fetch her. Bright cold weather it was, cart-chimneys smoking, carts pitched private on a piece of waste ground over at Wandsworth where you may see 'em from the Sou'western Railway when not upon the road. (Look out of the right-hand window going down.)

"Marigold," says the gentleman, giving his hand heartily, "I am very glad to see you."

"Yet I have my doubts, sir," says I, "if you can be half as glad to see me as I am to see you."

"The time has appeared so long,—has it, Marigold?"

"I won't say that, sir, considering its real length; but—"

"What a start, my good fellow!"

Ah! I should think it was! Grown such a woman, so pretty, so intelligent, so expressive! I knew then that she must be really like my child, or I could never have known her, standing quiet by the door.

"You are affected," says the gentleman, in a kindly manner.

"I feel, sir," says I, "that I am but a rough chap in a sleeved waistcoat."

"I feel," says the gentleman, "that it was you who raised her from misery and degradation, and brought her into communication with her kind. But why do we converse alone together, when we can converse so well with her? Address her in your own way."

"I am such a rough chap in a sleeved waistcoat, sir," says I, "and she is such a graceful woman, and she stands so quiet at the door!"

"Try if she moves at the old sign," says the gentleman.

They had got it up together o' purpose to please me! For when I give her the old sign, she rushed to my feet, and dropped upon her knees, holding up her hands to me with pouring tears of love and joy; and when I took her hands and lifted her, she clasped me round the neck, and lay there; and I don't know what a fool I didn't make of myself, until we all three settled down into talking without sound, as if there was a something soft and pleasant spread over the whole world for us.

So every item of my plan was crowned with success. Our reunited life was more than all that we had looked forward to. Content and joy went with us as the wheels of the two carts went round, and the same stopped with us when the two carts stopped. I was as pleased and as proud as a Pug-Dog with his muzzle black-leaded for a evening party, and his tail extra curled by machinery.

But I had left something out of my calculations. Now, what had I left out? To help you to a guess, I'll say, a figure. Come. Make a guess, and guess right. Naught? No. Nine? No. Eight? No. Seven? No. Six? No. Five? No. Four? No. Three? No. Two? No. One? No. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll say it's another sort of figure altogether. There. Why then, says you, it's a mortal figure. No, nor yet a mortal figure. By such means you get yourself penned into a corner, and you can't help guessing a *im*-mortal figure. That's about it. Why didn't you say so sooner?

Yes. It was a immortal figure that I had altogether left out of my calculations. Neither man's nor woman's, but a child's. Girl's, or boy's? Boy's. "'I', says the sparrow, 'with my bow and arrow.'" Now you have got it.

We were down at Lancaster, and I had done two nights more than fair average business (though I cannot in honour recommend them as a quick audience) in the open square there, near the end of the street where Mr. Sly's King's Arms and Royal Hotel stands. Mim's traveling giant, otherwise Pickleson, happened at the self-same time to be a trying it on in the town. The genteel lay was adopted with him. No hint of a van. Green baize alcove leading up to Pickleson in a Auction Room. Printed poster, "Free list suspended, with the exception of that proud boast of an enlightened country, a free press. Schools admitted by private arrangement. Nothing to raise a blush in the cheek of youth or shock the most fastidious." Mim swearing most horrible and terrific, in a pink calico pay-place, at the slackness of the public. Serious handbill in the shops, importing that it was almost impossible to come to a right understanding of the history of David without seeing Pickleson.

I went to the Auction Room in question, and I found it entirely empty of everything but echoes and mouldiness, with the single exception of Pickleson on a piece of red drugget. This suited my purpose, as I wanted a private and confidential word with him, which was: "Pickleson. Owing much happiness to you, I put you in my will for a fypunnote; but, to save trouble, here's fourpunten down, which may equally suit your views, and let us so conclude the transaction." Pickleson, who up to that remark had had the dejected appearance of a long Roman rushlight that couldn't anyhow get lighted, brightened up at his top extremity, and made his acknowledgments in a way which (for him) was parliamentary eloquence. He likewise did add, that, having ceased to draw as a Roman, Mim had made proposals for his going in as a conwerted Indian Giant worked upon by The Dairyman's Daughter. This, Pickleson, having no acquaintance with the tract named after that young woman, and not being willing to couple gag with his serious views, had declined to do, thereby leading to words and the total stoppage of the unfortunate young man's beer. All of which, during the whole of the interview, was confirmed by the ferocious growling of Mim down below in the pay-place, which shook the giant like a leaf.

But what was to the present point in the remarks of the traveling giant, otherwise Pickleson, was this: "Doctor Marigold"—I give his words without a hope of conveying their feebleness—"who is the strange young man that hangs about your carts?"—"The strange young *man?*"—I gives him back, thinking that he meant her, and his languid circulation had dropped a syllable. "Doctor," he returns, with a pathos calculated to draw a tear from even a manly eye, "I am weak, but not so weak yet as that I don't know my words. I repeat them, Doctor. The strange young man." It then appeared that Pickleson, being forced to stretch his legs (not that they wanted it) only at times when he couldn't be seen for nothing, to wit in the dead of the night and towards daybreak, had twice seen hanging about my carts, in that same town of Lancaster where I had been only

two nights, this same unknown young man.

It put me rather out of sorts. What it meant as to particulars I no more foreboded then than you forebode now, but it put me rather out of sorts. Howsoever, I made light of it to Pickleson, and I took leave of Pickleson, advising him to spend his legacy in getting up his stamina, and to continue to stand by his religion. Towards morning I kept a lookout for the strange young man, and—what was more—I saw the strange young man. He was well dressed and well looking. He loitered very nigh my carts, watching them like as if he was taking care of them, and soon after daybreak turned and went away. I sent a hail after him, but he never started or looked round, or took the smallest notice.

We left Lancaster within an hour or two, on our way towards Carlisle. Next morning, at daybreak, I looked out again for the strange young man. I did not see him. But next morning I looked out again, and there he was once more. I sent another hail after him, but as before he gave not the slightest sign of being anyways disturbed. This put a thought into my head. Acting on it, I watched him in different manners and at different times not necessary to enter into, till I found that this strange young man was deaf and dumb.

The discovery turned me over, because I knew that a part of that establishment where she had been was allotted to young men (some of them well off), and I thought to myself, "If she favours him, where am I? and where is all that I have worked and planned for?" Hoping—I must confess to the selfishness—that she might *not* favour him, I set myself to find out. At last I was by accident present at a meeting between them in the open air, looking on leaning behind a fir-tree without their knowing of it. It was a moving meeting for all the three parties concerned. I knew every syllable that passed between them as well as they did. I listened with my eyes, which had come to be as quick and true with deaf and dumb conversation as my ears with the talk of people that can speak. He was agoing out to China as clerk in a merchant's house, which his father had been before him. He was in circumstances to keep a wife, and he wanted her to marry him, and go along with him. She persisted, no. He asked if she didn't love him. Yes, she loved him dearly, dearly; but she could never disappoint her beloved, good, noble, generous, and I-don't-know-what all father (meaning me, the Cheap Jack in the sleeved waistcoat), and she would stay with him, Heaven bless him! though it was to break her heart. Then she cried most bitterly, and that made up my mind.

While my mind had been in an unsettled state about her favouring this young man, I had felt that unreasonable towards Pickleson, that it was well for him he had got his legacy down. For I often thought, "If it hadn't been for this same weak-minded giant, I might never have come to trouble my head and wex my soul about the young man." But, once that I knew she loved him—once that I had seen her weep for him—it was a different thing. I made it right in my mind with Pickleson on the spot, and I shook myself together to do what was right by all.

She had left the young man by that time (for it took a few minutes to get me thoroughly well shook together), and the young man was leaning against another of the fir-trees—of which there was a cluster—with his face upon his arm. I touched him on the back. Looking up and seeing me, he says, in our deaf and dumb talk, "Do not be angry."

"I am not angry, good boy, I am your friend. Come with me."

I left him at the foot of the steps of the Library Cart, and I went up alone. She was drying her eyes.

"You have been crying, my dear."

"Yes, father."

"Why?"

"A headache."

"Not a heartache?"

"I said a headache, father."

"Doctor Marigold must prescribe for that headache."

She took up the book of my Prescriptions, and held it up with a forced smile, but seeing me keep still and look earnest she softly laid it down again, and her eyes were very attentive.

"The Prescription is not there, Sophy."

"Where is it?"

"Here, my dear."

I brought her young husband in, and I put her hand in his, and my only further words to both of them were these: "Doctor Marigold's last prescription. To be taken for life." After which I bolted.

When the wedding come off, I mounted a coat (blue, and bright buttons), for the first and last time in all my days, and I give Sophy away with my own hand. There were only us three and the gentleman who had had charge of her for those two years.

I give the wedding dinner of four in the Library Cart. Pigeon pie, a leg of pickled pork, a pair of fowls, and suitable garden stuff. The best of drinks. I give them a speech, and the gentleman give us a speech, and all our jokes told, and the whole went off like a sky-rocket. In the course of the entertainment I explained to Sophy that I should keep the Library Cart as my living-cart when not upon the road, and that I should keep all her books for her just as they stood, till she come back to claim them. So she went to China with her young husband, and it was a parting sorrowful and heavy, and I got the boy I had another service; and so as of old, when my child and wife were gone, I went plodding along alone, with my whip over my shoulder, at the old horse's head.

Sophy wrote me many letters, and I wrote her many letters. About the end of the first year she sent me one in an unsteady hand: "Dearest father, not a week ago I had a darling little daughter, but I am so well that they let me write these words to you. Dearest and best father, I hope my child may not be deaf and dumb, but I do not yet know." When I wrote back, I hinted the question; but as Sophy never answered that question, I felt it to be a sad one, and I never repeated it. For a long time our letters were regular, but then they got irregular, through Sophy's husband being moved to another station, and through my being always on the move. But we were in one another's thoughts, I was equally sure, letters or no letters.

Five years, odd months, had gone since Sophy went away. I was still the King of the Cheap Jacks, and at a greater height of popularity than ever. I had had a first-rate autumn of it, and on the twenty-third of December, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, I found myself at Uxbridge, Middlesex, clean sold out. So I jogged up to London with the old horse, light and easy, to have my Christmas eve and Christmas day alone by the fire in the Library Cart, and then to buy a regular new stock of goods all round, to sell 'em again and get the money.

I am a neat hand at cookery, and I'll tell you what I knocked up for my Christmas-eve dinner in the Library Cart. I knocked up a beefsteak pudding for one, with two kidneys, a dozen oysters, and a couple of mushrooms thrown in. It's a pudding to put a man in good humour with everything except the two bottom buttons of his waistcoat. Having relished that pudding and cleared away, I turned the lamp low, and sat down by the light of the fire, watching it as it shone upon the backs of Sophy's books.

Sophy's books so brought up Sophy's self that I saw her touching face quite plainly, before I dropped off dozing by the fire. This may be a reason why Sophy, with her deaf and dumb child in her arms, seemed to stand silent by me all through my nap. I was on the road, off the road, in all sorts of places, North and South and West and East, Winds liked best and winds liked least, Here and there and gone astray, Over the hills and far away, and still she stood silent by me, with her silent child in her arms. Even when I woke with a start, she seemed to vanish, as if she had stood by me in that very place only a single instant before.

I had started at a real sound and the sound was on the steps of the cart. It was the light, hurried tread of a child, coming clambering up. That tread of a child had once been so familiar to me that for half a moment I believed I was a going to see a little ghost.

But the touch of a real child was laid upon the outer handle of the door, and the handle turned, and the door opened a little way, and a real child peeped in. A bright little comely girl with large dark eyes.

Looking full at me, the tiny creature took off her mite of a straw hat, and a quantity of dark curls fell all about her face. Then she opened her lips, and said in a pretty voice:

"Grandfather!"

"Ah, my God!" I cries out. "She can speak!"

"Yes, dear grandfather. And I am to ask you whether there was ever any one that I remind you of?"

In a moment Sophy was round my neck, as well as the child, and her husband was a wringing my hand with his face hid, and we all had to shake ourselves together before we could get over it. And when we did begin to get over it, and I saw the pretty child a talking, pleased and quick and eager and busy, to her mother, in the signs that I had first taught her mother, the happy and yet pitying tears fell rolling down my face.

So They Say

Mrs. P. C. Harvey:
Missouri delegate to the convention at Atlantic City of the General Federation of Women's Clubs

"I've never been at Atlantic City before, and, believe me, never again. It's disgusting to see grandmothers parading around in barely enough clothes to cover a sparrow. Some of these old women who think they are young Venuses have figures like mouthfuls of water."

Nicholas Longworth:
Speaker of the House of Representatives

"The average Congressman is not a superman, by any means."

Bernard Darwin:
Golfer, when Bobby Jones did the Sunningdale course in 66

"The boy's game was 'as perfect and chaste as Grecian statuary.'"

William E. Borah:
U. S. Senator from Idaho

"As for myself, I think that the enfranchisement of the slaves at the time it was brought about was one of the greatest mistakes ever made in this country."

Paul Hilton:
the "radio burglar" who terrorized Queens County, N. Y., convicted of murder—stating cigarettes were his only bad habit

"I'm not interested in women, liquor, coffee or pie. They would interfere with my training."

A Mennonite Minister:
of the "Hook-and-eye" Baptists, who consider buttons irreligious

"Already some of our young people are wearing buttons in place of hooks and eyes, and while the elders do not concede that it is proper, they countenance it for the sake of tolerance."

Miquel Primo de Rivera:
Marquis d'Estella; since Sept. 13, 1923, dictator of Spain

"I believe with Mussolini that the principle of liberty is very pretty as a principle, but is no longer sufficiently effective as a rule of conduct for a nation, and that it must be replaced by the principle of authority."

Mrs. Aimée Semple McPherson:
Evangelist of Los Angeles, whose tale of a sensational kidnapping started an elaborate police inquiry—denying that any love affair had to do with her disappearance

"The man I marry has not appeared on the scene yet. He must be good looking. He must be six feet tall or more. He must be a preacher. He must have rigid standards. He must play the trombone and be a good singer, and he must be a good and holy man."

Joseph Schildkraut:
Actor, after dismissing the fifth divorce suit started between himself and his wife

"There isn't any such thing as divorcing people who have really loved and lived. Legal action in such a case is only a burlesque."

Editor of *Blackwood's*:
a spokesman for the good old English Tories

"There was a happy time when the Englishman spoke of the 'damned foreigner,' and when he is awake from his delusion he will speak of the 'damned foreigner' again."

Harry Houdini:
Stage magician and crusader against spiritualism

"Millions of dollars are stolen by fraudulent mediums each year. Bring any medium to me, and I will prove that he is either a victim of psychosis or a crook."

COLONEL SAM PARK:
Vice-Consul in Biarritz, who has "commuted" across the Atlantic about forty times in fourteen years

"Why do I live in Europe and transact business in New York? Because Americans don't know how to play. . . . It's easier to get on the boat and go to Europe than it is to get to a golf course near New York."

THESET NAZIRAEL JUMBLAT:
The "Veiled Lady of Mukhtara," and "Queen" of the Druses who revolted against French colonial rule

"They said to the cows, 'when you die we will wrap you in fine linen sheets.' But the cows replied, 'we shall be very happy if we can keep our own hides.'"

EUGENE GOOSSENS:
English composer, and operatic and concert conductor

"I have no hesitation in saying that the Philadelphia Orchestra is the finest orchestra in the world to-day."

DR. ANNA PALMER:
Delegate of the Milton Women's Club

"My husband is the ideal club husband, because he lets me do just as I please."

NICOLA COVIELLO:
Old Italian musician, who came to America and heard a jazz band for the first time

"What's that?"
(*He then dropped dead.*)

COUNT SKRZYNSKI:
Former Premier of Poland, explaining his refusal to fire in his duel with General Sueptycki

"I wish to state that I deliberately do not want to shoot. I don't know how to miss, and I do not want to kill a man in whose veins flows the blood of my forefathers."

JAMES BERG:
Missionary superintendent in Mt. Vernon, N. Y., of the Lutheran Synod

"With a million-dollar gift for mission work on Long Island, we could make New York Christian."

FRANÇOIS GRIMOAID:
Bartender on the French liner "Savoie",

"I have seen old men wipe away a tear as they have tasted their first real cocktail after their years of disappointments and despair."

"PROFESSOR" JACK:
Expert in the art of tattooing, which has lately become a fad with the younger generation

"These are my own tattoo designs. I created them myself. That one of the woman before the cross is Rock of Ages, one of my most popular creations."

CHU CHAO HIN:
Former Ambassador to Great Britain; before the Opium Advisory Committee of the League of Nations

"I can officially inform the committee that the time when China will tolerate foreign interference in her internal affairs is nearing an end."

DR. MENAS GREGORY:
Head of Bellevue Hospital, New York

"There were 225 women in the psychopathic ward at my hospital last year, suffering from serious mental disorders caused by anxiety about their increased weight."

LT.-COM. RICHARD E. BYRD, U. S. N.:
Who first saw the North Pole from above

"We were there, over the top of the world, two bits of humanity in a roaring, whirring plane circling like a great bird in the sky. The Pole looked just as Peary described it—a vast field of white hummocks and pressure-ridges, with here and there frozen leads of greenish hue."

VLADIMIR DE PACHMAN:
Master pianist and individualist

"The doctors say you must have exercise. Well, I have never in my life taken any exercise. And I am seventy-seven. But I do not expect every one to follow my example, for, after all, I am Pachman, the unique. I laugh at your doctors."

"SERGEANT" LOUIS J. WILLIAMS:
Retiring, after a half-century of polishing shoes and brass buttons for the police of Charles St. Station, New York City

"All this success stuff is a lot of bunk. What does it get you? I see the 'successful' ones every day, riding in their limousines. Look at their faces. Are they jolly like mine? No! They're always worried. To-morrow I quit this job.... I've got a cottage over in Greene County.... What more could I want?"

COSMO HAMILTON:
Novelist and playwright

"If a man does not make love to his wife at least once a day, another man will inevitably do it for him."

H. MAIN:
Assistant editor, "Pioneer of India".

"The curse of India to-day is semi-education, such as the student gains in the Indian universities."

REV. TERTIUS VAN DYKE:
on resigning from the Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, N. Y., to take a country pastorate

"If I should put on a red vest and announce that I would give a trapeze performance in church, my church would be crowded."

MRS. A. C. TYLER:
National chairman, motion-picture department of Women's Clubs

"We shall work, also, to have the great motion-picture classics preserved."

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO:
Italian novelist, dramatist and firebrand, announcing a five-months' retirement

"Gabriele d'Annunzio notifies his innumerable clients and, without bitterness, the many madmen who wave flags, and the madmen who in chains are attracted by his ancient wisdom—that, from June 11 until All Saints' Day, he will remain shut up in his workshop, where his daily labours cannot be interrupted except by an unanticipated thunderbolt."

ROBERT E. VINSON:
President, Western Reserve University

"Religion is quite independent of any particular hypothesis of world origin, or construction, or development."

RANDALL GOULD:
U. P. correspondent in China

"'Free Love' in China, while no less shocking to the conservative Chinese mind than to the conservative occidental mind, actually means freedom to see one's future mate before marriage, and to exercise a voice in the selection."

SAAD ZAGLOUL PASHA:
Leader of the movement in Egypt for complete independence from Great Britain

"I am a man of struggle."

MRS. MARIE OLASIN:
Whose husband suddenly entered the New York beauty-shop where she worked, and shot four women there

"He was a mean man. He wasn't jealous; just plain mean."

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR.:
Capitalist and philanthropist

"I like an old suit. I am devoted to it after I have had it ten or fifteen years. I still have the suit that I wore at our first dinner twenty-five years ago."

BOOTH TARKINGTON:
Novelist and playwright

"Fifty years from now the skirt, as an article of women's apparel, will have disappeared entirely."

EDNA WALLACE HOPPER:
Actress, who married DeWolf Hopper in 1893; on her third matrimonial venture, this time with a French Duke

"The Duc de la Chatre is seventy, but he doesn't look it at all. He and I met through our mutual interest in retaining youth. We both are young in mind and body, although old in years."

A YOUNG GIRL:
Overheard at breakfast at a Park Avenue restaurant, New York, to her companion

"Doris was so liquored up last night, I had to undress her. She has lovely clothes, but she isn't hygienic. You know, she spends whole afternoons *ironing* her stockings, but she don't wash 'em. She don't open her windows at night, either. In the morning her room is like a monkey-house."

ULDINE MAYBELLE UTLEY:
Fourteen-year-old girl evangelist

"I would rather see one man or woman saved than to travel around the world, as I first thought of doing as a movie star."

BARONESS STERNBERG:
Leonie von Ungern, sister of Count Keyserling, instructress at Nat. Inst. of Political Science, Shanghai

"I feel that European morals and concepts of life have been destructive for the native peoples; these have overthrown all their traditional cultures, giving nothing firm, tangible or understandable to take their place."

HENRY A. CURRAN:
Ex-Commissioner of Immigration

"If the skyscrapers did not cluster along the spire of Manhattan as they do, we should not need the underground spinal cord of subways to minister to the needs of the sky-scraper monsters. These modern monuments of steel and stone have become tombs of decency and comfort."

ANDREW W. MELLON:
Secretary of the Treasury

"Farming differs from most industries in that the output largely fixes the prices, whereas in manufacturing the price largely controls output."

H. MORIN DE LINCLAYS:
Director, French Motor-bus Line of North Africa

"The motor bus has really won the Algerian Arabs for the French Government. By saving a little money, or taking it from their wives who work for it, they can travel for 50 or 100 miles on top of the swift-moving bus and leave dull care behind them."

A BRUSSELS NEWSPAPER:

"Belgian cat-skins go to make English rabbits for French furs."

MRS. RUTH J. MANSER:
Head of a chain of beauty schools

"Statistics show that more than 500,000 men use cosmetics."

JOSEPH CZACHOROWSKI:
who sued for divorce, because of his wife's relations with the spirit of her first husband

"She told me the spirit of her first husband materialized before her, and that she hugged and kissed him. Then she would cry for grief over him."

HAZEL DAWN:
Actress in Broadway successes

"Never in my life have I tasted tea or coffee. I have never smoked a cigarette. . . . I have never taken a drink of gin, whiskey, a cocktail or any other stimulant. . . . I am a Mormon . . . and 'The Word of Wisdom' admonishes us not to do anything that will injure or impair in its tendency either the mind or the body."

RATU MELI HALABOGI:
Chieftain of Viti Levu in the Fiji Islands

"The girls and women used to dress more modestly. Now the girls' dresses are short, the way the dresses of my people are. You have borrowed many customs from us. One of them is bobbed hair."

THADDEUS H. CARAWAY:
United States Senator from Arkansas

"I never saw a man in Washington who was satisfied with anything except what he himself did, and nobody else is satisfied with that."

ARTHUR WILLIAMS:
In court on a charge of begging

"You see, your Honour, it was like this. I was down in a speak-easy in the Bowery this morning. A friend of mine said you could get made up there as a cripple and go begging. He went out as a legless veteran. Another guy went out as a hunchback; and so I decided to try my luck as a one-armed veteran."

JAMES W. WADSWORTH:
United States Senator from New York

"When a leader, a man in public life, speaks in favour of things which he does not honestly believe in, he is guilty not only of intellectual corruption, but also of an attempt to corrupt others."

CARDINAL MUNDELEIN:
at the opening of the Eucharistic Congress in Chicago

"We believe that it is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father and the Son of the Virgin Mary, who, in a short while, when the little bell tinkles, will come down from Heaven at the wonder-working words of the consecrating prelate."

JUSTIN U. NIXON:
in "New Republic"

"All religions face a judgment day. Confronted by the challenge of novel situations, they either die, or change and grow. A vital religion thrives on crises."

Laughter

By LEONID ANDREYEV

Translated by Leon Saunders

AT SIX-THIRTY I was sure she would come, and I was exceedingly happy. My coat was buttoned with one upper hook only, and would open at every blow of the wind. But I did not feel the cold; my head was proudly thrown back, and my student's cap was hanging on the back of it; my eyes expressed toward the passing men only protection and audacity; toward the women—challenge and kindness; although for the last four days I loved only her, I was so young and my heart was so rich, that I could not remain absolutely indifferent toward other women. My steps were stiff, brave and buoyant.

At a quarter to seven my coat was buttoned with two buttons, and I looked only upon women, but without challenge and kindness, and rather with disgust. I needed only one woman—the rest could go to the devil; they only disturbed me, and, thanks to their similarity of appearance to her, my movements were uncertain and inconsistent.

At five minutes to seven I felt warm. At two minutes to seven I felt cold. Exactly at seven I realized she would not come. At eight I personified the most pitiful creature in the world.

My coat was buttoned up, my collar raised and my cap lowered over my blue nose; the hair on my temples, mustaches and eye-lashes was white with frost, and my teeth chattered slightly. With my scraping walk and bent back one could take me for an old man returning to the poorhouse. And all that was done by—her! Oh, the devil . . . no I mustn't: perhaps she could not, or she is ill, or dead. Dead!—and I am swearing.

II

"EVGENIA NIKOLAYEVNA will also be there," said a friend of mine, a student, without thinking any harm; he could not know I had waited for her in the cold from seven to eight-thirty.

"Is that so," I answered profoundly, and in my heart it leaped out "oh, the devil. . . . There is a party at the Polosoffs'. I never visited the Polosoffs. But I will be there to-night. "Segnores!" I exclaimed gaily. "To-day is Christmas; everybody is merry to-day—let us be merry, too!"

"But how?" mournfully asked one.

"And where?" another supported him.

"Let's put on masquerade costumes and visit all the gatherings,"—I decided.

And these heartless people actually became merry. They yelled, jumped and sang. They thanked me, and counted the money. And half an hour later we were gathering all over the City all the lonely, all the forlorn students, and when we were ten in all, we took ourselves to the barber-shop—which was also a costumery—and filled it with cold, youth and laughter.

I needed something tragic, beautiful, with a tint of sadness, and I said:

"Give me the costume of a Spanish nobleman."

He must have been a tall nobleman, because in his suit I was lost completely, and I began to feel lonely, as in a vast empty hall. Relieving myself of the costume, I asked for something different.

"Would you like a clown, many-coloured, with bells?"

"A clown!" I exclaimed, with disdain.

"Well, a bandit, then. Look at the hat and dagger!"

"A dagger! That suits me." To my regret, the band t whose garment I was offered, had scarcely reached his full growth. To be sure, he was a spoiled boy of eight years of age. His little hat did not cover my neck, and I had to be pulled out of his velvet trousers, as from a trap. A page's costume

did not fit—it was covered with spots, like a tiger. A monk's habiliment was full of holes.

"Well, what are you going to do? It's late," my friends were urging me. There remained only one costume—that of a noble Chinaman.

"Give me the Chinaman." I waved my hand, and they gave me the Chinaman.

It was the devil-knows-what. I forget the costume itself. I don't mention the idiotic coloured boots, which were too small for me. I will pass the pink rag which covered my head like a wig and was attached with threads to my ears, on account of which they stretched out and resembled those of a bat. But my mask!

It was, if one may say so, an abstract physiognomy. It had a nose, eyes and a mouth, and all that correct, everything in its place,—but it had nothing human in it. A man even in his grave could not look so calm. It expressed neither sadness nor gaiety nor surprize—it expressed absolutely nothing. It looked at you directly and calmly—and you were bound to be seized with an irresistible laughter. My colleagues were rolling over the sofas, shaking their sides with laughter and waving their hands. "That will be the most original mask," they said.

I almost cried, but when I looked at the mirror, laughter seized me. Yes, it would be the most original mask.

There must be no unmasking! Keep faith! Remember! thus we all agreed on the way.

III

It positively was the most original mask. People were following me in groups; they pushed me, turned me around, pinched me; and, when exhausted, I would turn with anger against my persecutors, an unrestrainable laughter would get hold of them. All the way I was surrounded by a roaring cloud of laughter, and I could not escape from the ring of insane mirth. At moments it had also seized me: I would yell, sing, dance, and the whole world circled in my eyes like a drunkard. And how far it was, this world from me! And how lonely I was under this mask!

Finally I was left alone. With anger and fear, with rancour and tenderness, I looked at her and said:

"This is I."

She slowly raised her thick eyelashes, a whole sheaf of black rays gushed over me, and a laughter, loud, gay, glowing like the spring sun, answered me.

"Yes, it is I. It is I!" I was repeating, and smiled. "Why did you not come today?" But she laughed. She laughed gaily.

I suffered much. My heart ached; I entreated her for an answer. But she laughed. The black luster of her eyes went out, and her smile became brighter. It was the sun, but a burning, a merciless sun.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Is it you?" she said, restraining herself. "You are so . . . funny!" My shoulders drooped, my head bent down, and there was despair in my pose. And while she, with the smile disappearing on her face, looked upon the young, gay couples whirling past us, I spoke:

"It's a shame to laugh! Don't you feel behind my funny mask a live suffering face? For it is only to see you that I put it on. Why did you not come?"

Quickly she turned toward me and . . . a cruel laughter gripped her. Suffocating, almost crying, covering her face with a laced, perfumed handkerchief, she said with difficulty:

"Look at yourself! Behind, in the mirror. . . . Oh, what a . . ."

With gnashing teeth, feeling a chill creeping over me, I looked in the mirror—and there looked back at me an idiotically, calm, imperturbably-indifferent, inhumanly motionless face. And I . . . I burst into laughter. Then, with this laughter not yet erased from my face, but—with a shudder of a rising anger, with the insanity of despair, I spoke, almost shouted:

"You must not laugh!"

And, when she had calmed herself, I continued in a whisper to talk about my love. Never have I spoken so well, because never have I loved so intensely; of the torments of waiting, of the poisonous tears, of insane jealousy and anguish, of my soul, where all was love, I spoke. And I saw how the lowered eye-lashes threw a dark shadow over the pallid cheeks. I saw how, through their frosted whiteness, a blazing flame threw its red reflex, and how the whole supple body leaned helplessly toward me. She was dressed as a goddess of the night; and all mysterious, in black lace like in darkness, sparkling with diamonds of stars, she was beautiful as a forgotten dream of the far childhood. I spoke—and tears were burning in my eyes, my heart was beating with happiness. And I saw, I finally saw that a dear, sad

smile had opened her lips, and that her eyelashes opened trembling.

Slowly, furtively, with infinite trust, she turned toward me her little head, and . . .

I never heard such a laughter! "No, no, I can't! . . ." she almost moaned, and again and again she would overflow with a loud cascade of mirth.

Oh, if I only for a moment could have a human face! I beat my lips, tears were running down my flaming face; and this idiotic physiognomy, in which everything was correct, nose, eyes, lips, looked out, immovably-terrible in its absurdity, its indifference. And when, limping on my coloured legs, I was going away, a sonorous laughter followed me, as though from a colossal height a silvery stream was falling, and with gay singing was breaking to pieces on a hard rock.

Scattered all over the sleeping street, waking the nightly stillness with sound, talking in excited tones, we walked home. A friend said to me:

"You had a colossal success. I never saw people laugh so. . . . Here, what are you doing? Why do you tear the mask? Hey, fellows, he is crazy! Look, he tears his costume! He is crying!"

White-Hands

By FIONA MACLEOD

O WHERE in the north, or where in the south, or where in the east or west
Is she who hath the flower-white hands and the swandown breast?
O, if she be west, or east she be, or in the north or south,
A sword will leap, a horse will prance, ere I win to Honey-Mouth.

She has great eyes, like the doe on the hill, and warm and sweet she is,
O, come to me, Honey Mouth, bend to me, Honey-Mouth, give me thy kiss!

White-Hands her name is, where she reigns amid the princes fair:
White hands she moves like swimming swans athrough her dusk-wave hair:
White hands she puts about my heart, white hands fan up my breath:
White hands take out the heart of me and grant me, life or death!

White hands make better songs than hymns, white hands are young and sweet:

O, a sword for me, O Honey-Mouth, and a war-horse fleet!

O wild sweet eyes! O glad wild eyes! O mouth, how sweet it is!
O, come to me, Honey-Mouth! bend to me, Honey-Mouth! give me thy kiss!

Monsieur Beaucaire

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

CHAPTER I

THE young Frenchman did very well what he had planned to do. His guess that the Duke would cheat proved good. As the unshod half-dozen figures that had been standing noiselessly in the entry way stole softly into the shadows of the chamber, he leaned across the table and smilingly plucked a card out of the big Englishman's sleeve.

"Merci, M. le Duc!" he laughed, rising and stepping back from the table.

The Englishman cried out, "It means the dirty work of silencing you with my bare hands!" and came at him.

"Do not move," said M. Beaucaire, so sharply that the other paused. "Observe behind you."

The Englishman turned, and saw what trap he had blundered into; then stood transfixed, impotent, alternately scarlet with rage and white with the vital shame of discovery. M. Beaucaire remarked, indicating the silent figures by a polite wave of the hand, "Is it not a compliment to monsieur that I procure six large men to subdue him? They are quite devote' to me, and monsieur is alone. Could it be that he did not wish even his lackeys to know he play with the yo'ng Frenchman who Meestaire Nash does not like in the pomp-room? Monsieur is unfortunate to have come on foot and alone to my apartment."

The Duke's mouth foamed over with chaotic revilement. His captor smiled brightly, and made a slight gesture, as one who brushes aside a boisterous insect. With the same motion he quelled to stony quiet a resentful impetus of his servants towards the Englishman.

"It's murder, is it, you carrion!" finished the Duke.

M. Beaucaire lifted his shoulders in a mock shiver. "What words! No, no, no! No killing! A such word to a such host! No, no, not mur-r-der; only disgrace!" He laughed a clear, light laugh with a rising inflection, seeming to launch himself upon an adventurous quest for sympathy.

"You little devilish scullion!" spat out the Duke.

"Tut, tut! But I forget. Monsieur has pursue' his studies of deportment, amongs' his fellow countrymen."

"Do you dream a soul in Bath will take your word that I—that I——"

"That M. le Duc de Winterset had a card up his sleeve?"

"You pitiful stroller, you stable-boy, born in a stable——"

"Is it not an honour to be born where monsieur must have been bred?"

"You scurvy foot-boy, you greasy barber, you cutthroat groom——"

"Overwhelm'!" The young man bowed with imperturbable elation. "M. le Duc appoint' me to all the office' of his housekeep'."

"You mustachioed fool, there are not five people of quality in Bath will speak to you——"

"No, monsieur, not on the parade; but how many come to play with me here? Because I will play always, night or day, for what one will, for any long, and always fair, monsieur."

"You outrageous varlet! Every one knows you came to England as the French Ambassador's barber. What man of fashion will listen to you? Who will believe you?"

"All people, monsieur. Do you think I have not calculate', that I shall make a failure of my little enterprise?"

"Bah!"

"Will monsieur not reseat himself?" M. Beaucaire made a low bow. "So. We

must not be too tire' for Lady Malbourne's rout. Ha, ha! And you, Jean, Victor, and you others, retire; go in the hallway. Attend at the entrance, François. So; now we shall talk. Monsieur, I wish you to think very cool. Then listen; I will be briefly. It is that I am well known to be all, entire' hones'. Gamblist? Ah, yes; true and mos' profitable; but fair, al—ways fair; every one say that. Is it not so? Think of it. And—is there never a w'isper come to M. le Duc that not all people belief him to play al—ways hones'? Ha, ha! Did it almos' be *said* to him las' year, after when he play' with Milor' Tappin'ford at the chocolate-house——"

"You dirty scandal-monger!" the Duke burst out. "I'll——"

"Monsieur, monsieur!" said the Frenchman. "It is a poor valour to insult a helpless captor. Can he retort upon his own victim? But it is for you to think of what I say. True, I am not reco'nize on the parade; that my frien's who come here do not present me to their ladies; that Meestaire Nash has reboff' me in the pomp-room; still, am I not known for being hones' and fair in my play, and will I *not* be belief', even I, when I lif' my voice and charge you aloud with what is already w'isper'? Think of it! You are a noble, and there will be some hang-dogs who might not fall away from you. Only such would be lef' to you. Do you want it tol'? And you can keep out of France, monsieur? I have lef' his service, but I have still the ear of M. de Mirepoix, and he know' I never lie. Not a gentleman will play you when you come to Paris."

The Englishman's white lip showed a row of scarlet dots upon it. "How much do you want?" he said.

The room rang with the gay laughter of Beaucaire. "I hol' your note' for seven-hunder' pound'. You can have them, monsieur. Why does a such great man come to play M. Beaucaire? Because no one else willin' to play M. le Duc—he can not pay. Ha, ha! So he come' to good Monsieur Beaucaire. Money, ha, ha! What I want with money?"

His Grace of Winterset's features were set awry to a sinister pattern. He sat glaring at his companion in a snarling silence.

"Money? Pouf!" snapped the little gambler. "No, no, no! It is that M. le Duc, impoverish', somewhat in a bad odour as he is, yet command, the *entrée any*-where —onless I— Ha, ha! Eh, monsieur?"

"Ha! You dare think to force *me*——"

M. Beaucaire twirled the tip of his slender mustache around the end of his white forefinger. Then he said: "Monsieur and me goin' to Lady Malbourne's ball to-night—M. le Duc and me!"

The Englishman roared, "Curse your impudence!"

"Sit quiet. Oh, yes, that's all; we goin' together."

"No!"

"Certain. I make all my little plan'. 'Tis all arrange'." He paused, and then said gravely, "You goin' present me to Lady Mary Carlisle."

The other laughed in utter scorn. "Lady Mary Carlisle, of all women alive, would be the first to prefer the devil to a man of no birth, barber."

"'Tis all arrange'; have no fear, nobody question monsieur's guest. You goin' take me to-night——"

"No!"

"Yes. And after—then *I* have the *entrée*. Is it much I ask? This one little favour, and I never w'isper, never breathe that—it is to say, I am always forever silent of monsieur's misfortune."

"*You* have the *entrée!*" sneered the other. "Go to a lackeys' rout and dance with the kitchen maids. If I would, I could not present you to Bath society. I should have cartels from the fathers, brothers, and lovers of every wench and madam in the place, even I. You would be thrust from Lady Malbourne's door five minutes after you entered it."

"No, no, no!"

"Half the gentlemen in Bath have been here to play. They would know you, wouldn't they, fool? You've had thousands out of Bantison, Rakell, Guilford and Townbrake. They would have you lashed by the grooms as your ugly deserts are. *You* speak to Lady Mary Carlisle! 'Od's blood! You! Also, dolt, she would know you if you escaped the others. She stood within a yard of you when Nash expelled you from the pump-room."

M. Beaucaire flushed slightly. "You think I did not see?" he asked.

"Do you dream that because Winterset introduces a low fellow he will be tolerated—that Bath will receive a barber?"

"I have the distinction to call monsieur's attention," replied the young man gayly, "I have renounce' that profession."

"Fool!"

"I am now a man of honour!"

"Faugh!"

"A man of the parts," continued the young Frenchman, "and of deportment; is it not so? Have you seen me of a fluster, or gross ever, or, what shall I say—*bourgeois?* Shall you be shame' for your guest' manner? No, no! And my appearance, is it of the people? Clearly, no. Do I not compare in taste of apparel with your yo'ng Englishman? Ha, ha! To be hope'. Ha, ha! So I am goin' talk with Lady Mary Carlisle."

"Bah!" The Duke made a savage burlesque. "'Lady Mary Carlisle, may I assume the honour of presenting the barber of the Marquis de Mirepoix?' So, is it?"

"No, monsieur," smiled the young man. "Quite not so. You shall have nothing to worry you, nothing in the worl'. I am goin' to assassinate my poor mustachio—also remove this horrible black peruke, and emerge in my own hair. Behol'!" He swept the heavy, curled mass from his head as he spoke, and his hair, coiled under the great wig, fell to his shoulders, and sparkled yellow in the candle-light. He tossed his head to shake the hair back from his cheeks. "When it is dress', I am transform'; nobody can know me; you shall observe. See how little I ask of you, how very little bit. No one shall reco'nize 'M. Beaucaire' or 'Victor.' Ha, ha! 'Tis all arrange'; you have nothing to fear."

"Curse you," said the Duke, "do you think I'm going to be saddled with you wherever I go, as long as you choose?"

"A mistake. No. All I requi—All I beg—is this one evening. 'Tis all shall be necessary. *After*, I shall not need monsieur."

"Take heed to yourself—after!" vouchsafed the Englishman between his teeth.

"Conquered!" cried M. Beaucaire, and clapped his hands gleefully. "Conquered for the night! Aha, it is riz'nable! I shall meet what you send—after. One cannot hope too much of your patience. It is but natural you should attem' a little avengement for the rascal trap I was such a wicked fellow as to set for you. I shall meet some strange frien's of yours after to-night; not so? I must try to be not too much frighten'." He looked at the Duke curiously. "You want to know why I create this tragedy, why I am so unkind as to entrap monsieur?"

His Grace of Winterset replied with a chill glance; a pulse in the nobleman's cheek beat less relentlessly; his eye raged not so bitterly; the steady purple of his own colour was returning; his voice was less hoarse; he was regaining his habit. "'Tis ever the manner of the vulgar," he observed, "to wish to be seen with people of fashion."

"Oh, no, no, no!" The Frenchman laughed. "'Tis not that. Am I not already one of these 'men of fashion'? I lack only the reputation of birth. Monsieur is goin' supply that. Ha, ha! I shall be noble from to-night. 'Victor,' the artis', is condemn' to death; his throat shall be cut with his own razor. 'M. Beaucaire'—" Here the young man sprang to his feet, caught up the black wig, clapped into it a dice-box from the table, and hurled it violently through the open door. "'M. Beaucaire' shall be choke' with his own dice-box. Who is the Phœnix to remain? What advantage have I not over other men of rank who are merely born to it? I may choose my own. No! Choose for me, monsieur. Shall I be chevalier, comte, vicomte, marquis, what? None. Out of compliment to monsieur can I wish to be anything he is not? No, no! I shall be M. le Duc, M. le Duc de—de Chateaurien. Ha, ha! You see? You are my *confrère*."

M. Beaucaire trod a dainty step or two, waving his hand politely to the Duke, as though in invitation to join the celebration of his rank. The Englishman watched, his eye still and harsh, already gathering in craftiness. Beaucaire stopped suddenly. "But how I forget my age! I am twenty-three," he said, with a sigh. "I rejoice too much to be of the quality. It has been too great for me, and I had always belief' myself free of such ambition. I thought it was enough to behol' the opera without wishing to sing; but no, England have teach' me I have those vulgar desire'. Monsieur, I am goin' tell you a secret; the ladies of your country are very diff'runt than ours. One may adore the demoiselle, one must worship the lady of England. Our ladies have the—it is the beauty of youth; yours remain comely at thirty. Ours are flowers, yours are stars! See, I betray myself, I am so poor a patriot. And there is one among these stars—ah, yes, there is one—the poor Frenchman has observe' from his humble distance; even there he could bask in the glowing!" M. Beaucaire turned to the window, and looked out into the dark. He did not see the lights of the town. When he turned again, he had half forgotten his prisoner; other pictures were before him.

"Ah, what radiance!" he cried. "Those people up over the sky, they want to show they wish the earth to be happy, so they smile, and make this lady. Gold-haired,

an angel of heaven, and yet a Diana of the chase! I see her fly by me on her great horse one day; she touch' his mane with her fingers. I buy that clipping from the groom. I have it here with my dear brother's picture. Ah, *you!* Oh, yes, you laugh! What do you know! 'Twas all I could get. But I have heard of the endeavour of M. le Duc to recoup his fortunes. This alliance shall fail. It is not the way—that heritage shall be safe' from him! It is you and me, monsieur! You can laugh! The war is open', and by *me!* There is one great step taken: until to-night there was nothing for you to ruin, to-morrow you have got a noble of France—your own *protégé*—to besiege and sack. And you are to lose, because you think such ruin easy, and because you understand nothing—far less—of divinity. How could you know? You have not the fiber; the heart of a lady is a blank to you; you know nothing of the vibration. There are some words that were made only to tell of Lady Mary, for her alone—*bellissima*, divine, *glorieuse!* Ah, how I have watch' her! It is sad to me when I see her surround' by your yo'ng captains, your nobles, your rattles, your beaux—ha, ha!—and I mus' hol' far aloof. It is sad for me—but oh, jus' to watch her and to wonder! Strange it is, but I have almos' cry out with rapture at a look I have see' her give another man, so beautiful it was, so tender, so dazzling of the eyes and so mirthful of the lips. Ah, divine coquetry! A look for another, *ah-i-me!* for many others; and even to you, one day, a rose, while I—I, monsieur, could not even be so blessed as to be the groun' beneath her little shoe! But *to-night*, monsieur—ha, ha!—*to-night*, monsieur, you and me, two princes, M. le Duc de Winterset and M. le Duc de Chateaurien—ha, ha! you see?—we are goin' arm-in-arm to that ball, and *I* am goin' have one of those looks, *I!* And a rose! *I!* It is time. But ten minute', monsieur. I make my apology to keep you waitin' so long while I go in the nex' room and execute my poor mustachio—that will be my only murder for jus' this one evening—and inves' myself in white satin. Ha, ha! I shall be very gran', monsieur. François, send Louis to me; Victor, to order two chairs for monsieur and me; we are goin' out in the worl' to-night!"

CHAPTER II

The chairmen swarmed in the street at Lady Malbourne's door, where the joyous vulgar fought with muddled footmen and tipsy link-boys for places of vantage whence to catch a glimpse of quality and of raiment at its utmost. Dawn was in the east, and the guests were departing. Singly or in pairs, glittering in finery, they came mincing down the steps, the ghost of the night's smirk fading to jadedness as they sought the dark recesses of their chairs. From within sounded the twang of fiddles still swinging manfully at it, and the windows were bright with the light of many candles. When the door was flung open to call the chair of Lady Mary Carlisle, there was an eager pressure of the throng to see.

A small, fair gentleman in white satin came out upon the steps, turned and bowed before a lady who appeared in the doorway, a lady whose royal loveliness was given to view for a moment in that glowing frame. The crowd sent up a hearty English cheer for the Beauty of Bath.

The gentleman smiled upon them delightedly. "What enchanting people!" he cried. "Why did I not know, so I might have shout' with them?" The lady noticed the people not at all; whereat, being pleased, the people cheered again. The gentleman offered her his hand; she made a slow courtesy; placed the tips of her fingers upon his own. "I am honoured, M. de Chateaurien," she said.

"No, no!" he cried earnestly. "Behol' a poor Frenchman whom emperors should envy." Then reverently and with the pride of his gallant office vibrant in every line of his light figure, invested in white satin and very grand, as he had prophesied, M. le Duc de Chateaurien handed Lady Mary Carlisle down the steps, an achievement which had figured in the ambitions of seven other gentlemen during the evening.

"Am I to be lef' in such onhappiness?" he said in a low voice. "That rose I have beg' for so long——"

"Never!" said Lady Mary.

"Ah, I do not deserve it, I know so well! But——"

"Never!"

"It is the greatness of my onworthiness that alone can claim your charity; let your kin' heart give this little red rose, this great alms, to the poor beggar."

"Never!"

She was seated in the chair. "Ah, give the rose," he whispered. Her beauty shone dazzlingly on him out of the dimness.

"Never!" she flashed defiantly as she was closed in. "Never!"

"Ah!"

"Never!"

The rose fell at his feet.

"A rose lasts till morning," said a voice behind him.

Turning, M. de Chateaurien looked beamingly upon the face of the Duke of Winterset.

"'Tis already the daylight," he replied, pointing to the east. "Monsieur, was it not enough honour for you to han' out madame, the aunt of Lady Mary? Lady Rellerton retain' much trace of beauty. 'Tis strange you did not appear more happy."

"The rose is of an unlucky colour, I think," observed the Duke.

"The colour of a blush, my brother."

"Unlucky, I still maintain," said the other, calmly.

"The colour of the veins of a Frenchman. Ha, ha!" cried the young man. "What price would be too high? A rose is a rose! A good-night, my brother, a good-night. I wish you dreams of roses, red roses, only beautiful red, red roses!"

"Stay! Did you see the look she gave these street folk when they shouted for her? And how are you higher than they, when she knows? As high as yonder horse-boy!"

"Red roses, my brother, only roses. I wish you dreams of red, red roses!"

CHAPTER III

'Twas well agreed by the fashion of Bath that M. le Duc de Chateaurien was a person of sensibility and *haut ton;* that his retinue and equipage surpassed in elegance; that his person was exquisite, his manner engaging. In the company of gentlemen his ease was slightly tinged with graciousness (his single equal in Bath being his Grace of Winterset); but it was remarked that when he bowed over a lady's hand, his air bespoke only a gay and tender reverence.

He was the idol of the dowagers within a week after his appearance; matrons warmed to him; young belles looked sweetly on him, while the gentlemen were won to admiration or envy. He was of prodigious wealth: old Mr. Bicksit, who dared not, for his fame's sake, fail to have seen all things, had visited Chateaurien under the present Duke's father, and descanted to the curious upon its grandeurs. The young noble had one fault, he was so poor a gambler. He cared nothing for the hazards of a die or the turn of a card. Gayly admitting that he had been born with no spirit of adventure in him, he was sure, he declared, that he failed of much happiness by his lack of taste in such matters.

But he was not long wanting the occasion to prove his taste in the matter of handling a weapon. A certain led-captain, Rohrer by name, notorious, amongst other things, for bearing a dexterous and bloodthirsty blade, came to Bath post-haste, one night, and jostled heartily against him in the pump-room on the following morning. M. de Chateaurien bowed, and turned aside without offense, continuing a conversation with some gentlemen near by. Captain Rohrer jostled against him a second time. M. de Chateaurien looked him in the eye, and apologized pleasantly for being so much in the way. Thereupon Rohrer procured an introduction to him, and made some observations derogatory to the valour and virtue of the French.

There was current a curious piece of gossip of the French court: a prince of the blood royal, grandson of the late Regent and second in the line of succession to the throne of France, had rebelled against the authority of Louis XV., who had commanded him to marry the Princess Henriette, cousin to both of them. The princess was reported to be openly devoted to the cousin who refused to accept her hand at the bidding of the king; and, as rumour ran, the prince's caprice elected in preference the discipline of Vincennes, to which retirement the furious king had consigned him. The story was the staple gossip of all polite Europe; and Captain Rohrer, having in his mind a purpose to make use of it in leading up to a statement that should be general to the damage of all Frenchwomen, and which a Frenchman might not pass over as he might a jog of the elbow, repeated it with garbled truths to make a scandal of a story which bore none on a plain relation.

He did not reach his deduction. M. de Chateaurien, breaking into his narrative, addressed him very quietly. "Monsieur," he said, "none but swine deny the nobleness of that good and gentle lady, Mademoiselle la Princess de Bourbon-Conti. Every Frenchman know' that her cousin is a bad rebel and ingrate, who had only honour and rispec' for her, but was so wilful he could not let even the king say, 'You shall marry here, you shall marry there.' My frien's," the young man turned to the others, "may I ask you to close roun' in a circle for one moment? It is clearly shown that the Duke of Orleans is a scurvy fellow, but not—" he wheeled about and touched Captain Rohrer

on the brow with the back of his gloved hand—"but not so scurvy as thou, thou swine of the gutter!"

Two hours later, with perfect ease, he ran Captain Rohrer through the left shoulder—after which he sent a basket of red roses to the Duke of Winterset. In a few days he had another captain to fight. This was a ruffling buck who had the astounding indiscretion to proclaim M. de Chateaurien an impostor. There was no Chateaurien, he swore. The Frenchman laughed in his face, and, at twilight of the same day, pinked him carefully through the right shoulder. It was not that he could not put aside the insult to himself, he declared to Mr. Molyneux, his second, and the few witnesses, as he handed his wet sword to his lackey—one of his station could not be insulted by a doubt of that station—but he fought in the quarrel of his friend Winterset. This rascal had asserted that M. le Duc had introduced an impostor. Could he overlook the insult to a friend, one to whom he owed his kind reception in Bath? Then, bending over his fallen adversary, he whispered: "Naughty man, tell your master find some better quarrel for the nex' he sen' agains' me."

The conduct of M. de Chateaurien was pronounced admirable.

There was no surprize when the young foreigner fell naturally into the long train of followers of the beautiful Lady Mary Carlisle, nor was there great astonishment that he should obtain marked favour in her eyes, shown so plainly that my Lord Townbrake, Sir Hugh Guilford, and the rich Squire Bantison, all of whom had followed her through three seasons, swore with rage, and his Grace of Winterset stalked from her aunt's house with black brows.

Meeting the Duke there on the evening after his second encounter, de Chateaurien smiled upon him brilliantly. "It was badly done; *oh*, so badly!" he whispered. "Can you afford to have me strip' of my mask by any but yourself? You, who introduce' me? They will say there is some bad scandal that I could force you to be my godfather. You mus' get the courage yourself."

"I told you a rose had a short life," was the answer.

"Oh, those roses! 'Tis the very greates' rizzon to gather each day a fresh one." He took a red bud from his breast for an instant, and touched it to his lips.

"M. de Chateaurien!" It was Lady Mary's voice; she stood at a table where a vacant place had been left beside her. "M. de Chateaurien, we have been waiting very long for you."

The Duke saw the look she did not know she gave the Frenchman, and he lost countenance for a moment.

"We approach a climax, eh, monsieur?" said M. de Chateaurien.

CHAPTER IV

THERE fell a clear September night, when the moon was radiant over town and country, over cobbled streets and winding roads. From the fields the mists rose slowly, and the air was mild and fragrant, while distances were white and full of mystery. All of Bath that pretended to fashion or condition was present that evening at a *fête* at the house of a country gentleman of the neighbourhood. When the stately junket was concluded, it was the pleasure of M. de Chateaurien to form one of the escort of Lady Mary's carriage for the return. As they took the road, Sir Hugh Guilford and Mr. Bantison, engaging in indistinct but vigorous remonstrance with Mr. Molyneux over some matter, fell fifty or more paces behind, where they continued to ride, keeping up their argument. Half a dozen other gallants rode in advance, muttering among themselves, or attended laxly upon Lady Mary's aunt on the other side of the coach, while the happy Frenchman was permitted to ride close to that adorable window which framed the fairest face in England.

He sang for her a little French song, a song of the *voyageur* who dreamed of home. The lady, listening, looking up at the bright moon, felt a warm drop upon her cheek, and he saw the tears sparkling upon her lashes.

"Mademoiselle," he whispered then, "I, too, have been a wanderer, but my dreams were not of France; no, I do not dream of that home, of that dear country. It is of a dearer country, a dream country—a country of gold and snow," he cried softly, looking at her white brow and the fair, lightly powdered hair above it. "Gold and snow, and the blue sky of a lady's eyes!"

"I had thought the ladies of France were dark, sir."

"Cruel! It is that she will not understan'! Have I speak of the ladies of France? No, no, no! It is of the faires' country; yes, 'tis a province of heaven, mademoiselle. Do I not renounce my allegiance to France? Oh, yes! I am subjec'—no, content to be slave—in the lan' of the blue sky, the gold, and the snow."

"A very pretty figure," answered Lady Mary, her eyes downcast. "But does it not hint a notable experience in the making of such speeches?"

"Tormentress! No. It prove' only the inspiration it is to know you."

"We English ladies hear plenty of the like, sir; and we even grow brilliant enough to detect the assurance that lies beneath the courtesies of our own gallants."

"*Merci!* I should believe so!" ejaculated M. de Chateaurien; but he smothered the words upon his lips.

Her eyes were not lifted. She went on: "We come, in time, to believe that true feeling comes faltering forth, not glibly; that smoothness betokens the adept in the art, sir, rather than your true—your true——" She was herself faltering; more, blushing deeply, and halting to a full stop in terror of a word. There was a silence.

"Your—true—lover," he said huskily. When he had said that word both trembled. She turned half way into the darkness of the coach.

"I know what make' you to doubt me," he said, faltering himself, though it was not his art that prompted him. "They have tol' you the French do nothing al—ways but make love, is it not so? Yes, you think *I* am like that. You think I am like that now!"

She made no sign.

"I suppose," he sighed, "I am unriz'-nable; I would have the snow not so col'—for jus' me."

She did not answer.

"Turn to me," he said.

The fragrance of the fields came to them, and from the distance the faint, clear note of a hunting-horn.

"Turn to me."

The lovely head was bent very low. Her little gloved hand lay upon the narrow window ledge. He laid his own gently upon it. The two hands were shaking like twin leaves in the breeze. Hers was not drawn away. After a pause, neither knew how long, he felt the warm fingers turn and clasp themselves tremulously about his own. At last she looked up bravely and met his eyes. The horn was wound again—nearer.

"All the cold was gone from the snows—long ago," she said.

"My beautiful!" he whispered; it was all he could say. "My beautiful!" But she clutched his arm, startled.

"*'Ware the road!*" A wild halloo sounded ahead. The horn wound loudly. "*'Ware the road!*" There sprang up out of the night a flying thunder of hoof-beats. The gentlemen riding idly in front of the coach scattered to the hedge-sides; and, with drawn swords flashing in the moon, a party of horsemen charged down the highway, their cries blasting the night.

"Barber! Kill the barber!" they screamed. "Barber! Kill the barber!"

Beaucaire had but time to draw his sword when they were upon him.

"*À moi!*" his voice rang out clearly as he rose in his stirrups. "*À moi*, François, Louis, Berquin! *À moi*, François!"

The cavaliers came straight at him. He parried the thrust of the first, but the shock of the collision hurled his horse against the side of the coach.

"Sacred swine!" he cried bitterly. "To endanger a lady, to make this brawl in a lady's presence! Drive on!" he shouted.

"No!" cried Lady Mary.

The Frenchman's assailants were masked, but they were not highwaymen. "Barber! Barber!" they shouted hoarsely, and closed in on him in a circle.

"See how he use his steel!" laughed M. Beaucaire, as his point passed through a tawdry waistcoat. For a moment he cut through the ring and cleared a space about him, and Lady Mary saw his face shining in the moonlight. "*Canaille!*" he hissed, as his horse sank beneath him; and, though guarding his head from the rain of blows from above, he managed to drag headlong from his saddle the man who had hamstrung the poor brute. The fellow came suddenly to the ground, and lay there.

"Is it not a compliment," said a heavy voice, "to bring six large men to subdue monsieur?"

"Oh, you are there, my frien'! In the rear—a—a little in the rear, I think. Ha, ha!"

The Frenchman's play with his weapon was a revelation of skill, the more extraordinary as he held in his hand only a light dress sword. But the ring closed about him, and his keen defense could not avail him for more than a few moments. Lady Mary's outriders, the gallants of her escort, rode up close to the coach and encircled it, not interfering.

"Sir Hugh Guilford!" cried Lady Mary wildly, "if you will not help him, give me your sword!" She would have leaped to the ground, but Sir Hugh held the door.

"Sit quiet, madam," he said to her; then, to the man on the box, "Drive on."

"If he does, I'll kill him!" she said fiercely. "Ah, what cowards! Will you see the Duke murdered?"

"The Duke!" laughed Guilford. "They will not kill him, unless—be easy, dear madam, 'twill be explained. Gad's life!" he muttered to Molyneux, "'Twere time the varlet had his lashing! D'ye hear her?"

"Barber or no barber," answered Molyneux, "I wish I had warned him. He fights as few gentlemen could. Ah—ah! Look at that! 'Tis a shame!"

On foot, his hat gone, his white coat sadly rent and gashed, flecked, too, with red, M. Beaucaire, wary, alert, brilliant, seemed to transform himself into a dozen fencing-masters; and, though his skill appeared to lie in delicacy and quickness, his play being continually with the point, sheer strength failed to beat him down. The young man was laughing like a child.

"Believe me," said Molyneux, "he's no barber! No, and never was!"

For a moment there was even a chance that M. Beaucaire might have the best of it. Two of his adversaries were prostrate, more than one were groaning, and the indomitable Frenchman had actually almost beat off the ruffians, when, by a trick, he was overcome. One of them, dismounting, ran in suddenly from behind, and seized his blade in a thick leather gauntlet. Before Beaucaire could disengage the weapon, two others threw themselves from their horses and hurled him to the earth. "*À moi! À moi,* François!" he cried as he went down, his sword in fragments, but his voice unbroken and clear.

"Shame!" muttered one or two of the gentlemen about the coach.

"'Twas dastardly to take him so," said Molyneux. "Whatever his deservings, I'm nigh of a mind to offer him a rescue in the Duke's face."

"Truss him up, lads," said the heavy voice. "Clear the way in front of the coach. There sit those whom we avenge upon a presumptuous lackey. Now, Whiffen, you have a fair audience, lay on and baste him."

Two men began to drag M. Beaucaire toward a great oak by the roadside. Another took from his saddle a heavy whip with three thongs.

"*À moi, François!*"

There was borne on the breeze an answer—"*Monseigneur! Monseigneur!*" The cry grew louder suddenly. The clatter of hoofs urged to an anguish of speed sounded on the night. M. Beaucaire's servants had lagged sorely behind, but they made up for it now. Almost before the noise of their own steeds they came riding down the moonlit aisle between the mists. Chosen men, these servants of Beaucaire, and like a thunderbolt they fell upon the astounded cavaliers.

"Chateaurien! Chateaurien!" they shouted, and smote so swiftly that, through lack of time, they showed no proper judgment, discriminating nothing between non-combatants and their master's foes. They charged first into the group about M. Beaucaire, and broke and routed it utterly. Two of them leaped to the young man's side, while the other four, swerving, scarce losing the momentum of their onset, bore on upon the gentlemen near the coach, who went down beneath the fierceness of the onslaught, cursing manfully.

"Our just deserts," said Mr. Molyneux, his mouth full of dust and philosophy.

Sir Hugh Guilford's horse fell with him, being literally ridden over, and the baronet's leg was pinned under the saddle. In less than ten minutes from the first attack on M. Beaucaire, the attacking party had fled in disorder, and the patrician non-combatants, choking with expletives, consumed with wrath, were prisoners, disarmed by the Frenchman's lackeys.

Guilford's discomfiture had freed the doors of the coach; so it was that when M. Beaucaire, struggling to rise, assisted by his servants, threw out one hand to balance himself, he found it seized between two small, cold palms, and he looked into two warm, dilating eyes, that were doubly beautiful because of the fright and rage that found room in them, too.

M. le Duc de Chateaurien sprang to his feet without the aid of his lackeys, and bowed low before Lady Mary.

"I make ten thousan' apology to be the cause of a such *mêlée* in your presence," he said; and then, turning to François, he spoke in French: "Ah, thou scoundrel! A little, and it had been too late."

François knelt in the dust before him. "Pardon!" he said. "Monseigneur commanded us to follow far in the rear, to remain unobserved. The wind malignantly blew against monseigneur's voice."

"See what it might have cost, my children," said his master, pointing to the ropes with which they would have bound him and to the whip lying beside them. A shudder passed over the lackey's frame; the utter horror in his face echoed in the eyes of his fellows.

"Oh, monseigneur!" François sprang back, and tossed his arms to heaven.

"But it did not happen," said M. Beaucaire.

"It could not!" exclaimed François.

"No. And you did very well, my children—" the young man smiled benevolently—"very well. And now," he continued, turning to Lady Mary and speaking in English, "let me be asking of our gallants yonder what make' them to be in cabal with highwaymen. One should come to a polite understanding with them, you think? Not so?"

He bowed, offering his hand to conduct her to the coach, where Molyneux and his companions, having drawn Sir Hugh from under his horse, were engaged in reviving and reassuring Lady Rellerton, who had fainted. But Lady Mary stayed Beaucaire with a gesture, and the two stood where they were.

"Monseigneur!" she said, with a note of raillery in her voice, but raillery so tender that he started with happiness. His movement brought him a hot spasm of pain, and he clapped his hand to a red stain on his waistcoat.

"You are hurt!"

"It is nothing," smiled M. Beaucaire. Then, that she might not see the stain spreading, he held his handkerchief over the spot. "I am a little—but jus' a trifling—bruise'; 'tis all."

"You shall ride in the coach," she whispered. "Will you be pleased, M. de Chateaurien?"

"Ah, my beautiful!" She seemed to wave before him like a shining mist. "I wish that ride might las' for al—ways! Can you say that, mademoiselle?"

"Monseigneur," she cried in a passion of admiration, "I would what you would have be, should be. What do you not deserve? You are the bravest man in the world!"

"Ha, ha! I am jus' a poor Frenchman."

"Would that a few Englishmen had shown themselves as 'poor' to-night. The vile cowards, not to help you!" With that, suddenly possessed by her anger, she swept away from him to the coach.

Sir Hugh, groaning loudly, was being assisted into the vehicle.

"My little poltroons," she said, "what are you doing with your fellow-craven, Sir Hugh Guilford, there?"

"Madame," replied Molyneux humbly, "Sir Hugh's leg is broken. Lady Rellerton graciously permits him to be taken in."

"*I* do not permit it! M. de Chateaurien rides with us."

"But——"

"Sir! Leave the wretch to groan by the roadside," she cried fiercely, "which plight I would were that of all of you. But there will be a pretty story for the gossips to-morrow! And I could almost find pity for you when I think of the wits when you return to town. Fine gentlemen you; hardy bravoes, by heaven! to leave one man to meet a troop of horse single-handed, while you huddle in shelter until you are overthrown and disarmed by servants! Oh, the wits! Heaven save you from the wits!"

"Madam."

"Address me no more! M. de Chateaurien, Lady Rellerton and I will greatly esteem the honour of your company. Will you come?"

She stepped quickly into the coach, and was gathering her skirts to make room for the Frenchman, when a heavy voice spoke from the shadows of the tree by the wayside.

"Lady Mary Carlisle will, no doubt, listen to a word of counsel on this point."

The Duke of Winterset rode out into the moonlight, composedly untieing a mask from about his head. He had not shared the flight of his followers, but had retired into the shade of the oak, whence he now made his presence known with the utmost coolness.

"Gracious heavens, 'tis Winterset!" exclaimed Lady Rellerton.

"Turned highwayman and cutthroat," cried Lady Mary.

"No, no," laughed M. Beaucaire, somewhat unsteadily, as he stood, swaying a little, with one hand on the coach-door, the other pressed hard on his side, "he only oversee'; he is jus' a little bashful, sometime'. He is a great man, but he don' want *all* the glory!"

"Barber," replied the Duke, "I must tell you that I gladly descend to bandy words with you; your monstrous impudence is a claim to rank I cannot ignore. But a lackey who has himself followed by six other lackeys——"

"Ha, ha! Has not M. le Duc been busy all this evening to justify me? And I think mine mus' be the bes' six. Ha, ha! You think?"

"M. de Chateaurien," said Lady Mary, "we are waiting for you."

"Pardon," he replied. "He has something to say; maybe it is bes' if you hear it now."

"I wish to hear nothing from him—ever!"

"My faith, madam," cried the Duke,

"this saucy fellow has paid you the last insult! He is so sure of you he does not fear you will believe the truth. When all is told, if you do not agree he deserved the lashing we planned to——"

"I'll hear no more!"

"You will bitterly repent it, madam. For your own sake I entreat——"

"And I also," broke in M. Beaucaire. "Permit me, mademoiselle; let him speak."

"Then let him be brief," said Lady Mary, "for I am earnest to be quit of him. His explanation of an attack on my friend and on my carriage should be made to my brother."

"Alas, that he was not here," said the Duke, "to aid me! Madam, was your carriage threatened? I have endeavoured only to expunge a debt I owed to Bath and to avenge an insult offered to yourself through——'

"Sir, sir, my patience will bear little more!"

"A thousan' apology," said M. Beaucaire. "You will listen, I only beg, Lady Mary?"

She made an angry gesture of assent.

"Madam, I will be brief as I may. Two months ago there came to Bath a French gambler calling himself Beaucaire, a desperate fellow with the cards or dice, and all the men of fashion went to play at his lodging, where he won considerable sums. He was small, wore a black wig and mustachio. He had the insolence to show himself everywhere until the Master of Ceremonies rebuffed him in the pump-room, as you know, and after that he forebore his visits to the rooms. Mr. Nash explained (and was confirmed, madam, by indubitable information) that this Beaucaire was a man of unspeakable, vile, low birth, being, in fact, no other than a lackey of the French king's ambassador, Victor by name, de Mirepoix's barber. Although his condition was known, the hideous impudence of the fellow did not desert him, and he remained in Bath, where none would speak to him."

"Is your farrago nigh done, sir?"

"A few moments, madam. One evening, three weeks gone, I observed a very elegant equipage draw up to my door, and the Duke of Chateaurien was announced. The young man's manners were worthy—according to the French acceptance—and 'twere idle to deny him the most monstrous assurance. He declared himself a noble traveling for pleasure. He had taken lodgings in Bath for a season, he said, and called at once to pay his respects to me. His tone was so candid—in truth, I am the simplest of men, very easily gulled—and his stroke so bold, that I did not for one moment suspect him; and, to my poignant regret—though in the humblest spirit I have shown myself eager to atone—that very evening I had the shame of presenting him to yourself."

"The shame, sir!"

"Have patience, pray, madam. Ay, the shame! You know what figure he hath cut in Bath since that evening. All ran merrily with him until several days ago Captain Badger denounced him as an impostor, vowing that Chateaurien was nothing."

"Pardon," interrupted M. Beaucaire. "'Castle Nowhere' would have been so much better. Why did you not make him say it that way, monsieur?"

Lady Mary started; she was looking at the Duke, and her face was white. He continued: "Poor Captain Badger was stabbed that same day——"

"Most befitting poor Captain Badger," muttered Molyneux.

"—And his adversary had the marvelous insolence to declare that he fought in *my* quarrel! This afternoon the wounded man sent for me, and imparted a very horrifying intelligence. He had discovered a lackey whom he had seen waiting upon Beaucaire in attendance at the door of this Chateaurien's lodging. Beaucaire had disappeared the day before Chateaurien's arrival. Captain Badger looked closely at Chateaurien at their next meeting, and identified him with the missing Beaucaire beyond the faintest doubt. Overcome with indignation, he immediately proclaimed the impostor. Out of regard for me, he did not charge him with being Beaucaire; the poor soul was unwilling to put upon me the humiliation of having introduced a barber; but the secret weighed upon him till he sent for me and put everything in my hands. I accepted the odium; thinking only of atonement. I went to Sir John Wimpledon's *fête*. I took poor Sir Hugh, there, and these other gentlemen aside, and told them my news. We narrowly observed this man, and were shocked at our simplicity in not having discovered him before. These are men of honour and cool judgment, madam. Mr. Molyneux had acted for him in the affair of Captain Badger, and was strongly prejudiced in his favour; but Mr. Molyneux, Sir Hugh, Mr. Bantison, every one of them, in short, recognized him. In spite of his smooth face and his light hair, the adventurer Beaucaire was writ upon him amazing plain. Look at him, madam, if he will dare the inspection. You saw this Beaucaire well,

tne day of his expulsion from the rooms. Is not this he?"

M. Beaucaire stepped close to her. Her pale face twitched.

"Look!" he said.

"Oh, oh!" she whispered with a dry throat, and fell back in the carriage.

"Is it so?" cried the Duke.

"I do not know—I—cannot tell."

"One moment more. I begged these gentlemen to allow me to wipe out the insult I had unhappily offered to Bath, but particularly to you. They agreed not to forestall me or to interfere. I left Sir John Wimpledon's early, and arranged to give the sorry rascal a lashing under your own eyes, a satisfaction due the lady into whose presence he had dared to force himself."

"'*Noblesse oblige'?*" said M. Beaucaire in a tone of gentle inquiry.

"And now, madam," said the Duke, "I will detain you not one second longer. I plead the good purpose of my intentions, begging you to believe that the desire to avenge a hateful outrage, next to the wish to serve you, forms the dearest motive in the heart of Winterset."

"Bravo!" cried Beaucaire softly.

Lady Mary leaned toward him, a thriving terror in her eyes. "It is false?" she faltered.

"Monsieur should not have been born so high. He could have made little book'."

"You mean it is false?" she cried breathlessly.

"'Od's blood, is she not convinced?" broke out Mr. Bantison. "Fellow, were you not the ambassador's barber?"

"It is all false?" she whispered.

"The mos' fine art, mademoiselle. How long you think it take M. de Winterset to learn that speech after he write it out? It is a mix of what is true and the mos' chaste art. Monsieur has become a man of letters. Perhaps he may enjoy that more than the wars. Ha, ha!"

Mr. Bantison burst into a roar of laughter. "Do French gentlemen fight lackeys? Ho, ho, ho! A pretty country. We English do as was done to-night, have our servants beat them."

"And attend ourselves," added M. Beaucaire, looking at the Duke, "somewhat in the background? But, pardon," he mocked, "that remind' me. François, return to Mr. Bantison and these gentlemen their weapons."

"Will you answer a question?" said Molyneux mildly.

"Oh, with pleasure, monsieur.'

"Were you ever a barber?"

"No, monsieur," laughed the young man.

"Pah!" exclaimed Bantison. "Let me question him. Now, fellow, a confession may save you from jail. Do you deny you are Beaucaire?"

"Deny to such a judge?"

"Ha!" said Bantison. "What more do you want, Molyneux? Fellow, do you deny that you came to London in the ambassador's suite?"

"No, I do not deny."

"He admits it! Didn't you come as his barber?"

"Yes, my frien', as his barber."

Lady Mary cried out faintly, and, shuddering, put both hands over her eyes.

"I'm sorry," said Molyneux. "You fight like a gentleman."

"I thank you, monsieur."

"You called yourself Beaucaire?"

"Yes, monsieur." He was swaying to and fro; his servants ran to support him.

"I wish—" continued Molyneux, hesitating. "Evil take me!—but I'm sorry you're hurt."

"Assist Sir Hugh into my carriage," said Lady Mary.

"Farewell, mademoiselle!" M. Beaucaire's voice was very faint. His eyes were fixed upon her face. She did not look toward him.

They were propping Sir Hugh on the cushions. The Duke rode up close to Beaucaire, but François seized his bridle fiercely, and forced the horse back on its haunches.

"The man's servants worship him," said Molyneux.

"Curse your insolence!" exclaimed the Duke. "How much am I to bear from this varlet and his varlets? Beaucaire, if you have not left Bath by to-morrow noon, you will be clapped into jail, and the lashing you escaped to-night shall be given you thrice tenfold!"

"I shall be—in the—Assembly—Room' at nine—o'clock, one week—from—to-night," answered the young man, smiling jauntily, though his lips were colourless. The words cost him nearly all his breath and strength. "You mus' keep—in the—backgroun', monsieur. Ha, ha!"

The door of the coach closed with a slam.

"Mademoiselle—fare—well!"

"Drive on!" said Lady Mary.

M. Beaucaire followed the carriage with his eyes. As the noise of the wheels and the hoof-beats of the accompanying caval-

cade grew fainter in the distance, the handkerchief he had held against his side dropped into the white dust, a heavy red splotch.

"Only—roses," he gasped, and fell back in the arms of his servants.

CHAPTER V

BEAU NASH stood at the door of the rooms, smiling blandly upon a dainty throng in the pink of its finery and gay furbelows. The great exquisite bent his body constantly in a series of consummately adjusted bows: before a great dowager, seeming to sweep the floor in august deference; somewhat stately to the young bucks; greeting the wits with gracious friendliness and a twinkle of raillery; inclining with fatherly gallantry before the beauties; the degree of his inclination measured the altitude of the recipient as accurately as a nicely calculated sand-glass measures the hours.

The King of Bath was happy, for wit, beauty, fashion—to speak more concretely: nobles, belles, gamesters, beaux, statesmen, and poets—made fairyland (or opera bouffe, at least) in his dominions; play ran higher and higher, and Mr. Nash's coffers filled up with gold. To crown his pleasure, a prince of the French blood, the young Comte de Beaujolais, just arrived from Paris, had reached Bath at noon in state, accompanied by the Marquis de Mirepoix, the ambassador of Louis XV. The Beau dearly prized the society of the lofty, and the present visit was an honour to Bath: hence to the Master of Ceremonies. What was better, there would be some profitable hours with the cards and dice. So it was that Mr. Nash smiled never more benignly than on that bright evening. The rooms rang with the silvery voices of women and delightful laughter, while the fiddles went merrily, their melodies chiming sweetly with the joyance of his mood.

The skill and brazen effrontery of the ambassador's scoundrelly servant in passing himself off for a man of condition formed the point of departure for every conversation. It was discovered that there were but three persons present who had not suspected him from the first; and, by a singular paradox, the most astute of all proved to be old Mr. Bicksit, the traveler, once a visitor at Chateaurien; for he, according to report, had by a coup of diplomacy entrapped the impostor into admission that there was no such place. However, like poor Captain Badger, the worthy old man had held his peace out of regard for the Duke of Winterset. This nobleman, heretofore secretly disliked, suspected of irregular devices at play, and never admired, had won admiration and popularity by his remorse for the mistake, and by the modesty of his attitude in endeavouring to atone for it, without presuming upon the privilege of his rank to laugh at the indignation of society; an action the more praiseworthy because his exposure of the impostor entailed the disclosure of his own culpability in having stood the villain's sponsor. To-night, the happy gentleman, with Lady Mary Carlisle upon his arm, went grandly about the rooms, sowing and reaping a harvest of smiles. 'Twas said work would be begun at once to rebuild the Duke's country seat, while several ruined Jews might be paid out of prison. People gazing on the beauty and the stately but modest hero by her side, said they would make a noble pair. She had long been distinguished by his attentions, and he had come brilliantly out of the episode of the Frenchman, who had been his only real rival. Wherever they went, there arose a buzz of pleasing gossip and adulation.

Mr. Nash, seeing them near him, came forward with greetings. A word on the side passed between the nobleman and the exquisite.

"I had news of the rascal to-night," whispered Nash. "He lay at a farm till yesterday, when he disappeared; his ruffians, too."

"You have arranged?" asked the Duke.

"Fourteen bailiffs are watching without. He could not come within gunshot. If they clap eyes on him, they will hustle him to jail, and his cutthroats shall not avail him a hair's weight. The impertinent swore he'd be here by nine, did he?"

"He said so; and 'tis a rash dog, sir."

"It is just nine now."

"Send out to see if they have taken him."

"Gladly." The Beau beckoned an attendant, and whispered in his ear.

Many of the crowd had edged up to the two gentlemen with apparent carelessness, to overhear their conversation. Those who did overhear repeated it in covert asides, and this circulating undertone, confirming a vague rumour that Beaucaire would attempt the entrance that night, lent a pleasurable colour of excitement to the evening. The French prince, the ambassador, and their suites were announced. Polite as the assembly was, it was also

curious, and there occurred a mannerly rush to see the newcomers. Lady Mary, already pale, grew whiter as the throng closed round her; she looked up pathetically at the Duke, who lost no time in extricating her from the pressure.

"Wait here," he said; "I will fetch you a glass of negus," and disappeared. He had not thought to bring a chair, and she, looking about with an increasing faintness and finding none, saw that she was standing by the door of a small side-room. The crowd swerved back for the passage of the legate of France, and pressed upon her. She opened the door, and went in.

The room was empty save for two gentlemen, who were quietly playing cards at a table. They looked up as she entered. They were M. Beaucaire and Mr. Molyneux.

She uttered a quick cry and leaned against the wall, her hand to her breast. Beaucaire, though white and weak, had brought her a chair before Molyneux could stir.

"Mademoiselle——"

"Do not touch me!" she cried, with such frozen abhorrence in her voice that he stopped short. "Mr. Molyneux, you seek strange company!"

"Madam," replied Molyneux, bowing deeply, as much to Beaucaire as to herself, "I am honoured by the presence of both of you."

"Oh, are you mad!" she exclaimed, contemptuously.

"This gentleman has exalted me with his confidence, madam," he replied.

"Will you add your ruin to the scandal of this fellow's presence here? How he obtained entrance——"

"Pardon, mademoiselle," interrupted Beaucaire. "Did I not say I should come? M. Molyneux was so obliging as to answer for me to the fourteen frien's of M. de Winterset and *Meestaire* Nash."

"Do you not know,"—she turned vehemently upon Molyneux,—"that he will be removed the moment I leave this room? Do you wish to be dragged out with him? For your sake, sir, because I have always thought you a man of heart, I give you a chance to save yourself from disgrace—and —your companion from jail. Let him slip out by some retired way, and you may give me your arm and we will enter the next room as if nothing had happened. Come sir——"

"Mademoiselle——"

"Mr. Molyneux, I desire to hear nothing from your companion. Had I not seen you at cards with him I should have supposed him in attendance as your lackey. Do you desire to take advantage of my offer, sir?"

"Mademoiselle, I could not tell you, on that night——"

"You may inform your high-born friend, Mr. Molyneux, that I heard everything he had to say; that my pride once had the pleasure of listening to his high-born confession!"

"Ah, it is gentle to taunt one with his birth, mademoiselle? Ah, no! There is a man in my country who say strange things of that—that a man is not his father, but *himself*."

"You may inform your friend, Mr. Molyneux, that he had a chance to defend himself against accusation; that he said all——"

"That I did say all I could have strength to say. Mademoiselle, you did not see—as it was right—that I had been stung by a big wasp. It was nothing, a scratch; but, mademoiselle, the sky went round and the moon dance' on the earth. I could not wish that big wasp to see he had stung me; so I mus' only say what I can have strength for, and stan' straight till he is gone. Beside', there are other rizzons. Ah, you mus' belief! My Molyneux I sen' for, and tell him all, because he show courtesy to the yo'ng Frenchman, and I can trus' him. I trus' you, mademoiselle—long ago—and would have tol' you ev'rything, excep' jus' because—well, for the romance, the fon! You belief? It is so clearly so; you do belief, mademoiselle?"

She did not even look at him. M. Beaucaire lifted his hand appealingly toward her. "Can there be no faith in—in—" he said timidly, and paused. She was silent, a statue, my Lady Disdain.

"If you had not belief me to be an impostor; if I had never said I was Chateaurien; if I had been jus' that Monsieur Beaucaire of the story they tol' you, but never with the *heart* of a lackey, an hones' man, a *man*, the man you knew, *himself* could you—would you—" He was trying to speak firmly; yet, as he gazed upon her splendid beauty, he choked slightly, and fumbled in the lace at his throat with unsteady fingers—"Would you—have let me ride by your side in the autumn moonlight?" Her glance passed by him as it might have passed by a footman or a piece of furniture. He was dressed magnificently, a multitude of orders glittering on his breast. Her eye took no knowledge of him.

"Mademoiselle—I have the honour to ask you; if you had known this Beaucaire was hones', though of peasant birth, would you——"

Involuntarily, controlled as her icy presence was, she shuddered. There was a moment of silence.

"Mr. Molyneux," said Lady Mary, "in spite of your discourtesy in allowing a servant to address me, I offer you a last chance to leave this room undisgraced. Will you give me your arm?"

"Pardon me, madam," said Mr. Molyneux.

Beaucaire dropped into a chair with his head bent low and his arm outstretched on the table; his eyes filled slowly in spite of himself, and two tears rolled down the young man's cheeks.

"An' live men are jus'—*names!*" said M. Beaucaire.

CHAPTER VI

In the outer room, Winterset, unable to find Lady Mary, and supposing her to have joined Lady Rellerton, disposed of his negus, then approached the two visitors to pay his respects to the young prince, whom he discovered to be a stripling of seventeen, arrogant-looking, but pretty as a girl. Standing beside the Marquis de Mirepoix—a man of quiet bearing—he was surrounded by a group of the great, among whom Mr. Nash naturally counted himself. The Beau was felicitating himself that the foreigners had not arrived a week earlier, in which case he and Bath would have been detected in a piece of gross ignorance concerning the French nobility—making much of de Mirepoix's ex-barber.

"'Tis a lucky thing that fellow was got out of the way," he ejaculated, under cover.

"Thank me for it," rejoined Winterset.

An attendant begged Mr. Nash's notice. The head bailiff sent word that Beaucaire had long since entered the building by a side door. It was supposed Mr. Nash had known of it, and the Frenchman was not arrested, as Mr. Molyneux was in his company, and said he would be answerable for him. Consternation was so plain on the Beau's trained face that the Duke leaned toward him anxiously.

"The villain's in, and Molyneux hath gone mad!"

Mr. Bantison, who had been fiercely elbowing his way toward them, joined heads with them. "You may well say he is in," he exclaimed, "and if you want to know where, why, in yonder card-room. I saw him through the half-open door."

"What's to be done?" asked the Beau.

"Send the bailiffs——"

"Fie, fie! A file of bailiffs? The scandal!"

"Then listen to me," said the Duke. "I'll select half-a-dozen gentlemen, explain the matter, and we'll put him in the center of us and take him out to the bailiffs. 'Twill appear nothing. Do you remain here and keep the attention of Beaujolais and de Mirepoix. Come, Bantison, fetch Townbrake and Harry Rakell yonder; I'll bring the others."

Three minutes later, his Grace of Winterset flung wide the card-room door, and, after his friends had entered, closed it.

"Ah!" remarked M. Beaucaire quietly. "Six more large men."

The Duke, seeing Lady Mary, started; but the angry signs of her interview had not left her face, and reassured him. He offered his hand to conduct her to the door. "May I have the honour?"

"If this is to be known, 'twill be better if I leave after; I should be observed if I went now."

"As you will, madam," he answered, not displeased. "And now, you impudent villain," he began, turning to M. Beaucaire, but to fall back astounded. "'Od's blood, the dog hath murdered and robbed some royal prince!" He forgot Lady Mary's presence in his excitement. "Lay hands on him!" he shouted. "Tear those orders from him!"

Molyneux threw himself between. "One word!" he cried. "One word before you offer an outrage you will repent all your lives!"

"Or let M. de Winterset come alone," laughed M. Beaucaire.

"Do you expect me to fight a cutthroat barber, and with bare hands?"

"I think one does not expec' monsieur to fight anybody. Would *I* fight you, you think? That was why I had my servants, that evening we play. I would gladly fight almos' any one in the worl'; but I did not wish to soil my hand with a——"

"Stuff his lying mouth with his orders!" shouted the Duke.

But Molyneux still held the gentlemen back. "One moment," he cried.

"M. de Winterset," said Beaucaire, "of what are you afraid? You calculate well. Beaucaire might have been belief—an impostor that you yourself expose'? Never! But I was not goin' reveal that secret. You have not absolve me of my promise."

"Tell what you like," answered the Duke. "Tell all the wild lies you have time for. You have five minutes to make up your mind to go quietly."

"Now you absolve me, then? Ha, ha! Oh, yes! Mademoiselle," he bowed to Lady Mary, "I have the honour to reques' you leave the room. You shall miss no details if these frien's of yours kill me, on the honour of a French gentleman."

"A French what?" laughed Bantison.

"Do you dare keep up the pretense?" cried Lord Townbrake. "Know, you villain barber, that your master, the Marquis de Mirepoix, is in the next room."

Molyneux heaved a great sigh of relief. "Shall I—" He turned to M. Beaucaire.

The young man laughed, and said: "Tell him come here at once."

"Impudent to the last!" cried Bantison, as Molyneux hurried from the room.

"Now you goin' to see M. Beaucaire's master," said Beaucaire to Lady Mary. "'Tis true what I say, the other night. I cross from France in his suite; my passport say as his barber. Then to pass the *ennui* of exile, I come to Bath and play for what one will. It kill the time. But when the people hear I have been a servant they come only secretly; and there is one of them —he has absolve' me of a promise not to speak—of him I learn something he cannot wish to be tol'. I make some trouble to learn this thing. Why I should do this? Well—that is my own rizzon. So I make this man help me in a masque, the unmasking it was, for, as there is no one to know me, I throw off my black wig and become myself —and so I am 'Chateaurien,' Castle Nowhere. Then this man I use', this Winterset, he——"

"I have great need to deny these accusations?" said the Duke.

"Nay," said Lady Mary wearily.

"Shall I tell you why I mus' be 'Victor' and 'Beaucaire' and 'Chateaurien,' and not myself?"

"To escape from the bailiffs for debts for razors and soap," gibed Lord Townbrake.

"No, monsieur. In France I have got a cousin who is a man with a very bad temper at some time', and he will never enjoy his relatives to do what he does not wish——"

He was interrupted by a loud commotion from without. The door was flung open, and the young Count of Beaujolais bounded in and threw his arms about the neck of M. Beaucaire.

"Philippe!" he cried. "My brother, I have come to take you back with me."

M. de Mirepoix followed him, bowing as a courtier, in deference; but M. Beaucaire took both his hands heartily. Molyneux came after, with Mr. Nash, and closed the door.

"My warmest felicitations," said the Marquis. "There is no longer need for your incognito."

"Thou best of masters!" said Beaucaire, touching him fondly on the shoulder. "I know. Your courier came safely. And so I am forgiven! But I forget." He turned to the lady. She had begun to tremble exceedingly. "Faires' of all the English fair," he said, as the gentlemen bowed low to her deep courtesy, "I beg the honour to presen' to Lady Mary Carlisle, M. le Comte de Beaujolais. M. de Mirepoix has already the honour. Lady Mary has been very kind to me, my frien's; you mus' help me make my acknowledgment. Mademoiselle and gentlemen, will you give me that favour to detain you one instan'?"

"Henri," he turned to the young Beaujolais, "I wish you had shared my masque—I have been so gay!" The surface of his tone was merry, but there was an undercurrent, weary-sad, to speak of what was the mood, not the manner. He made the effect of addressing every one present, but he looked steadily at Lady Mary. Her eyes were fixed upon him, with a silent and frightened fascination, and she trembled more and more. "I am a great actor, Henri. These gentlemen are yet scarce convince' I am not a lackey! And I mus' tell you that I was jus' now to be expelled for having been a barber!"

"Oh, no!" the ambassador cried out. "He would not be content with me; he would wander over a strange country."

"Ha, ha, my Mirepoix! And what is better, one evening I am oblige' to fight some frien's of M. de Winterset there, and some ladies and cavaliers look on, and they still think me a servant. Oh, I am a great actor! 'Tis true there is not a peasant in France who would not have then known one 'born'; but they are wonderful, this English people, holding by an idea once it is in their heads—a mos' worthy quality. But my good Molyneux here, he had speak to me with courtesy, jus' because I am a man an' because he is al—ways kind. (I have learn' that his great-grandfather was a Frenchman.) So I sen' to him and tell him ev'rything, and he gain admittance for me here to-night to await my frien's.

"I was speaking to messieurs about my cousin, who will meddle in the affair' of

his relativ'. Well, that gentleman, he make a marriage for me with a good and accomplish' lady, very noble and very beautiful—an amiable." (The young count at his elbow started slightly at this, but immediately appeared to wrap himself in a mantle of solemn thought.) "Unfortunately, when my cousin arrange' so, I was a dolt, a little blockhead; I swear to marry for myself and when I please, or never if I like. That lady is all things charming and gentle, and, in truth, she is—very much attach' to me—why should I not say it? I am so proud of it. She is very faithful and forgiving and sweet; she would be the same, I think, if I—were even—a lackey. But I? I was a dolt, a little unsensible brute; I did not value such thing' then; I was too yo'ng, las' June. So I say to my cousin, 'No, I make my own choosing!' 'Little fool,' he answer, 'she is the one for you. Am I not wiser than you?' And he was very angry, and, as he has influence in France, word come' that he will get me put in Vincennes, so I mus' run away quick till his anger is gone. My good frien' Mirepoix is jus' leaving for London; he take' many risk' for my sake; his hairdresser die before he start', so I travel as that poor barber. But my cousin is a man to be afraid of when he is angry, even in England, and I mus' not get my Mirepoix in trouble. I mus' not be discover' till my cousin is ready to laugh about it all and make it a joke. And there may be spies; so I change my name again, and come to Bath to amuse my retreat with a little gaming—I am al—ways fond of that. But three day' ago M. le Marquis send me a courier to say that my brother, who know where I had run away, is come from France to say that my cousin is appease'; he need me for his little theater, the play can not go on. I do not need to espouse mademoiselle. All shall be forgiven if I return, and my brother and M. de Mirepoix will meet me in Bath to felicitate.

"There is one more thing to say, that is all. I have said I learn' a secret, and use it to make a man introduce me if I will not tell. He has absolve' me of that promise. My frien's, I had not the wish to ruin that man. I was not receive'; *Meestaire* Nash had reboff me; I had no other way excep' to use this fellow. So I say, 'Take me to Lady Malbourne's ball as "Chateaurien."' I throw off my wig, and shave, and behol', I am M. le Duc de Castle Nowhere. Ha, ha! You see?"

The young man's manner suddenly changed. He became haughty, menacing. He stretched out his arm, and pointed at Winterset. "Now I am no 'Beaucaire,' messieurs. I am a French gentleman. The man who introduce' me at the price of his honour, and then betray' me to redeem it, is that coward, that card-cheat there!"

Winterset made a horrible effort to laugh. The gentlemen who surrounded him fell away as from pestilence. "A French gentleman!" he sneered savagely, and yet fearfully. "I don't know who you are. Hide behind as many toys and ribbons as you like; I'll know the name of the man who dares bring such a charge!"

"Sir!" cried de Mirepoix sharply, advancing a step towards him; but he checked himself at once. He made a low bow of state, first to the young Frenchman, then to Lady Mary and the company. "Permit me' Lady Mary and gentlemen," he said, "to assume the honour of presenting you to His Highness, Prince Louis-Philippe de Valois, Duke of Orleans, Duke of Chartres, Duke of Nemours, Duke of Montpensier, First Prince of the Blood Royal, First Peer of France, Lieutenant-General of French Infantry, Governor of Dauphiné, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Grand Master of the Order of Notre Dame, of Mount Carmel, and of St. Lazarus in Jerusalem; and cousin to His Most Christian Majesty, Louis the Fifteenth, King of France."

"Those are a few of my brother's names," whispered Henri of Beaujolais to Molyneux. "Old Mirepoix has the long breath, but it takes a strong man two days to say all of them. I can suppose this Winterset know' now who bring the charge!"

"Castle Nowhere!" gasped Beau Nash, falling back upon the burly prop of Mr. Bantison's shoulder.

"The Duke of Orleans will receive a message from me within the hour!" said Winterset, as he made his way to the door. His face was black with rage and shame.

"I tol' you that I would not soil my hand with you," answered the young man. "If you send a message no gentleman will bring it. Whoever shall bear it will receive a little beating from François."

He stepped to Lady Mary's side. Her head was bent low, her face averted. She seemed to breathe with difficulty, and leaned heavily upon a chair. "Monseigneur," she faltered in a half whisper, "can you—forgive me? It is a bitter—mistake—I have made. Forgive."

"Forgive?" he answered, and his voice was as broken as hers; but he went on, more

firmly: "It is—nothing—less than nothing. There is—only jus' one—in the—whole worl' who would not have treat' me the way that you treat' me. It is to her that I am goin' to make reparation. You know something, Henri? I am not goin' back only because the king forgive' me. I am goin' to *please* him; I am goin' to espouse mademoiselle, our cousin. My frien's, I ask your felicitations."

"And the king does not compel him!" exclaimed young Henri.

"Henri, you want to fight me?" cried his brother sharply. "Don't you think the King of France is a wiser man than me?"

He offered his hand to Lady Mary.

"Mademoiselle is fatigue'. Will she honour me?"

He walked with her to the door, her hand fluttering faintly in his. From somewhere about the garments of one of them a little cloud of faded rose-leaves fell, and lay strewn on the floor behind them. He opened the door, and the lights shone on a multitude of eager faces turned toward it. There was a great hum of voices, and, over all, the fiddles wove a wandering air, a sweet French song of the *voyageur*.

He bowed very low, as, with fixed and glistening eyes, Lady Mary Carlisle, the Beauty of Bath, passed slowly by him and went out of the room.

A Love Song of Daghestan

Translated by E. Powys Mathers

I

THE mountains of Bech-Parma are great enough,
But my love is greater.

The glaciers that marble their tops are white,
But your breasts are whiter.

The antelope stricken by my bullet
Weeps a red blood from its wound

Which dyes with large red flowers
The field of the blowing jasmine flowers of snow.

Your arms are whiter than the jasmine flowers of snow;
And your kiss is redder than the blood of the antelope.

The mountains of Bech-Parma are great enough,
But my love is greater.

II

The wind screaming in the forest when the wind of Russia blows
Is milder than the desire that draws me to thee.

Your body smells richer than the resin
That weeps in the sun from slender pines.

And your mouth has more of odours
Than mint flowers throw on the air.

When you are by my side, I feel in my body
A warmth more suave than the softest sun-rays.

And when you go away from me, my sadness
Is blacker than the lowering night great with storm.

The wind screaming in the forest when the wind of Russia blows
Is milder than the desire that draws me to thee.

A Night at an Inn

By LORD DUNSANY

The Curtain rises on a room in an inn. (SNIGGERS *and* BILL *are talking.* THE TOFF *is reading a paper.* ALBERT *sits a little apart.*)

SNIGGERS—What's his idea, I wonder?

BILL—I don't know.

SNIGGERS—And how much longer will he keep us here?

BILL—We've been here three days.

SNIGGERS—And 'aven't seen a soul.

BILL—And a pretty penny it cost us when he rented the pub.

SNIGGERS—'Ow long did 'e rent the pub for?

BILL—You never know with him.

SNIGGERS—It's lonely enough.

BILL—'Ow long did you rent the pub for, Toffy? (THE TOFF *continues to read a sporting paper; he takes no notice of what is said.*)

SNIGGERS—'E's such a toff.

BILL—Yet 'e's clever, no mistake.

SNIGGERS—Those clever ones are the beggars to make a muddle. Their plans are clever enough, but they don't work, and then they make a mess of things much worse than you or me.

BILL—Ah!

SNIGGERS—I don't like this place.

BILL—Why not?

SNIGGERS—I don't like the looks of it.

BILL—He's keeping us here because here those niggers can't find us. The three heathen priests what was looking for us so. But we want to go and sell our ruby soon.

ALBERT—There's no sense in it.

BILL—Why not, Albert?

ALBERT—Because I gave those black devils the slip in Hull.

BILL—You give 'em the slip, Albert?

ALBERT—The slip, all three of them. The fellows with the gold spots on their foreheads. I had the ruby, then, and I give them the slip in Hull.

BILL—How did you do it, Albert?

ALBERT—I had the ruby and they were following me. . . .

BILL—Who told them you had the ruby? You didn't show it?

ALBERT—No. . . . But they kind of know.

SNIGGERS—They kind of know, Albert?

ALBERT—Yes, they know if you've got it. Well, they sort of mouched after me, and I tells a policeman and he says, Oh, they were only three poor niggers and they wouldn't hurt me. Ugh! When I thought of what they did in Malta to poor old Jim.

BILL—Yes, and to George in Bombay, before we started.

SNIGGERS—Ugh!

BILL—Why didn't you give 'em in charge?

ALBERT—What about the ruby, Bill?

BILL—Ah!

ALBERT—Well, I did better than that. I walks up and down through Hull. I walks slow enough. And then I turns a corner and I runs. I never sees a corner but I turns it. But sometimes I let a corner pass just to fool them. I twists about like a hare. Then I sits down and waits. No priests.

SNIGGERS—What?

ALBERT—No heathen black devils with gold spots on their face. I give 'em the slip.

BILL—Well done, Albert.

SNIGGERS (*after a sigh of content*)—Why didn't you tell us?

ALBERT—'Cause 'e won't let you speak. 'E's got 'is plans and 'e thinks we're silly folk. Things must be done 'is way. And all the time I've give 'em the slip. Might 'ave 'ad one o' them crooked knives in him before now but for me, who give 'em the slip in Hull.

BILL—Well done, Albert.

SNIGGERS—Do you hear that, Toffy? Albert has give 'em the slip.

THE TOFF—Yes, I hear.

SNIGGERS—Well, what do you say to that?

THE TOFF—Oh. . . . Well done, Albert.

ALBERT—And what a' you going to do?

THE TOFF—Going to wait.

ALBERT—Don't seem to know what 'e's waiting for.

SNIGGERS—It's a nasty place.

ALBERT—It's getting silly, Bill. Our money's gone and we want to sell the ruby. Let's get on to a town.

BILL—But 'e won't come.

ALBERT—Then we'll leave him.

SNIGGERS—We'll be all right if we keep away from Hull.

ALBERT—We'll go to London.

BILL—But 'e must 'ave 'is share.

SNIGGERS—All right. Only let's go. (*To* THE TOFF.) We're going, do you hear? Give us the ruby.

THE TOFF—Certainly. (*He gives them a ruby from his waistcoat pocket: it is the size of a small hen's egg. He goes on reading his paper.*)

ALBERT—Come on, Sniggers. (*Exeunt* ALBERT *and* SNIGGERS.)

BILL—Good-bye, old man. We'll give you your fair share, but there's nothing to do here, no girls, no halls, and we must sell the ruby.

THE TOFF—I'm not a fool, Bill.

BILL—No, no, of course not. Of course you ain't, and you've helped us a lot. Good-bye. You'll say good-bye?

THE TOFF—Oh, yes. Good-bye. (*Still reads paper. Exit* BILL. THE TOFF *puts a revolver on the table beside him and goes on with his paper.*)

SNIGGERS (*out of breath*)—We've come back, Toffy.

THE TOFF—So you have.

ALBERT—Toffy,—how did they get here?

THE TOFF—They walked, of course.

ALBERT—But it's eighty miles.

SNIGGERS—Did you know they were here, Toffy?

THE TOFF—Expected them about now.

ALBERT—Eighty miles.

BILL—Toffy, old man—what are we to do?

THE TOFF—Ask Albert.

BILL—If they can do things like this there's no one can save us but you, Toffy—I always knew you were a clever one. We won't be fools any more. We'll obey you, Toffy.

THE TOFF—You're brave enough and strong enough. There isn't many that would steal a ruby eye out of an idol's head, and such an idol as that was to look at, and on such a night. You're brave enough, Bill. But you're all three of you fools. Jim would have none of my plans—and where's Jim? And George. What did they do to him?

SNIGGERS—Don't, Toffy!

THE TOFF—Well, then, your strength is no use to you. You want cleverness; or they'll have you the way that they had George and Jim.

ALL—Ugh!

THE TOFF—Those black priests would follow you round the world in circles, year after year, till they got the idol's eye. And if we died with it they'd follow our grandchildren. That fool thinks he can escape men like that by running round three streets in the town of Hull.

ALBERT—God's truth, *you* 'aven't escaped them, because they're *'ere.*

THE TOFF—So I supposed.

ALBERT—You *supposed!*

THE TOFF—Yes, I believe there's no announcement in the Society papers. But I took this country seat especially to receive them. There's plenty of room if you dig; it is pleasantly situated, and, what is most important, it is in a very quiet neighbourhood. So I am at home to them this afternoon.

BILL—Well, you're a deep one.

THE TOFF—And remember you've only my wits between you and death, and don't put your futile plans against those of an educated gentleman.

ALBERT—If you're a gentleman, why don't you go about among gentlemen instead of the likes of us?

THE TOFF—Because I was too clever for them, as I am too clever for you.

ALBERT—Too clever for them?

THE TOFF—I never lost a game of cards in my life.

BILL—You never lost a game?

THE TOFF—Not when there was money on it.

BILL—Well, well.

THE TOFF—Have a game of poker?

ALL—No, thanks.

THE TOFF—Then do as you're told.

BILL—All right, Toffy.

SNIGGERS—I saw something just then. Hadn't we better draw the curtains?

THE TOFF—No.

SNIGGERS—What?

THE TOFF—Don't draw the curtains.

SNIGGERS—Oh, all right.

BILL—But Toffy, they can see us. One doesn't let the enemy do that. I don't see why. . . .

THE TOFF—No, of course you don't.

BILL—Oh, all right, Toffy. (*All begin to pull out revolvers.*)

THE TOFF (*putting his own away*)—No revolvers, please.

ALBERT—Why not?

THE TOFF—Because I don't want any noise at my party. We might get guests that hadn't been invited. *Knives* are a different matter. (*All draw knives.* The Toff *signs to them not to draw them yet.* TOFFY *has already taken back his ruby.*)

BILL—I think they're coming, Toffy.

THE TOFF—Not yet.

ALBERT—When will they come?

THE TOFF—When I am quite ready to receive them. Not before.

SNIGGERS—I should like to get this over.

THE TOFF—Should you? Then we'll have them now.

SNIGGERS—Now?

THE TOFF—Yes. Listen to me. You shall do as you see me do. You will all pretend to go out. I'll show you how. I've got the ruby. When they see me alone they will come for their idol's eye.

BILL—How can they tell like this which of us has it?

THE TOFF—I confess I don't know, but they seem to.

SNIGGERS—What will you do when they come in?

THE TOFF—I shall do nothing.

SNIGGERS—What?

THE TOFF—They will creep up behind me. Then my friends, Sniggers and Bill and Albert, who gave them the slip, will do what they can.

BILL—All right, Toffy. Trust us.

THE TOFF—If you're a little slow you will see enacted the cheerful spectacle that accompanied the demise of Jim.

SNIGGERS—Don't, Toffy. We'll be there all right.

THE TOFF—Very well. Now watch me. (*He goes past the windows to the inner door* R.; *he opens it inwards. Then, under cover of the open door he slips down on his knee, and closes it, remaining on the inside, appearing to have gone out. He signs to the others, who understand. Then he appears to re-enter in the same manner.*) Now, I shall sit with my back to the door. You go out one by one, so far as our friends can make out. Crouch very low to be on the safe side. They mustn't see you through the window. (BILL *makes his sham exit.*) Remember, no revolvers. The police are, I believe, proverbially inquisitive. (*The other two follow* BILL. *All three are now crouching inside the door* R. THE TOFF *puts the ruby beside him on the table. He lights a cigarette. The door in back opens so slowly that you can hardly say at what moment it began.* THE TOFF *picks up his paper. A Native of India wriggles along the floor ever so slowly, seeking cover from chairs. He moves* L. *where* THE TOFF *is. The three sailors are* R. SNIGGERS *and* ALBERT *lean forward.* BILL'S *arm keeps them back. An armchair had better conceal them from the Indian. The black* PRIEST *nears* THE TOFF. BILL *watches to see if any more are coming. Then he leaps forward alone—he has taken his boots off—and knifes the* PRIEST. *The* PRIEST *tries to shout, but* BILL'S *left hand is over his mouth.* THE TOFF *continues to read his sporting paper. He never looks round.*)

BILL (*sotto voce*)—There's only one, Toffy. What shall we do?

THE TOFF (*without turning his head*)—Only one?

BILL—Yes.

THE TOFF—Wait a moment. Let me think. (*Still apparently absorbed in his paper.*) Ah, yes. You go back, Bill. We must attract another guest. Now are you ready?

BILL—Yes.

THE TOFF—All right. You shall now see my demise at my Yorkshire residence. You must receive guests for me. (*He leaps up in full view of the window, flings up both arms and falls on to the floor near the dead* PRIEST.) Now be ready. (*His eyes close. There is a long pause. Again the door opens, very, very slowly. Another* PRIEST *creeps in. He has three golden spots upon his forehead. He looks round, then he creeps up to his companion and turns him over and looks inside each of his clenched hands. Then he looks at the recumbent* TOFF. *Then he creeps towards him.* BILL *slips after him and knifes him like the other, with his left hand over his mouth.*)

BILL (*sotto voce*)—We've only got two. Toffy.

THE TOFF—Still another.

BILL—What'll we do?

THE TOFF (*sitting up*)—Hum.

BILL—This is the best way, much.

THE TOFF—Out of the question. Never play the same game twice.

BILL—Why not, Toffy?

THE TOFF—Doesn't work if you do.

BILL—Well?

THE TOFF—I have it, Albert. You will now walk into the room. I showed you how to do it.

ALBERT—Yes.

THE TOFF—Just run over here and have a fight at this window with these two men.

ALBERT—But they're——

THE TOFF—Yes, they're dead, my perspicuous Albert. But Bill and I are going to resuscitate them—Come on. (BILL *picks up a body under the arms.*) That's right, Bill. (*Does the same.*) Come and help us, Sniggers. (SNIGGERS *comes.*) Keep low, keep low. Wave their arms about, Sniggers. Don't show yourself. Now, Albert, over you go. Our Albert is slain. Back you get, Bill. Back, Sniggers. Still, Albert. Mustn't move when he comes. Not a muscle. (*A face appears at the window and stays for some time. Then the door opens, and looking craftily round, the third* PRIEST *enters. He looks at his companions' bodies, and turns round. He suspects something. He takes up one of the knives, and with a knife in each hand he puts his back to the wall. He looks to the left and right.*) Come on, Bill! (*The* PRIEST *rushes to the door.* THE TOFF *knifes the last* PRIEST *from behind.*) A good day's work, my friends.

BILL—Well done, Toffy. Oh, you are a deep one.

ALBERT—A deep one, if ever there was one.

SNIGGERS—There ain't any more, Bill, are there?

THE TOFF—No more in the world, my friend.

BILL—Aye, that's all there are. There were only three in the temple. Three priests and their beastly idol.

ALBERT—What is it worth, Toffy? Is it worth a thousand pounds?

THE TOFF—It's worth all they've got in the shop. Worth just whatever we like to ask for it.

ALBERT—Then we're millionaires, now.

THE TOFF—Yes, and what is more important, we no longer have any heirs.

BILL—We'll have to sell it now.

ALBERT—That won't be easy. It's a pity it isn't small and we had half a dozen. Hadn't the idol any other on him?

BILL—No, he was green jade all over and only had this one eye. He had it in the middle of his forehead, and was a long sight uglier than anything else in the world.

SNIGGERS—I'm sure we ought all to be very grateful to Toffy.

BILL—And indeed we ought.

ALBERT—If it hadn't 'ave been for him—

BILL—Yes, if it hadn't 'a' been for old Toffy . . .

SNIGGERS—He's a deep one.

THE TOFF—Well, you see, I just have a knack of foreseeing things.

SNIGGERS—I should think you did.

BILL—Why, I don't suppose anything happens that our Toff doesn't foresee. Does it, Toffy?

THE TOFF—Well, I don't think it does, Bill. I don't think it often does.

BILL—Life is no more than just a game of cards to our old Toff.

THE TOFF—Well, we've taken these fellows' trick.

SNIGGERS (*going to the window*)—It wouldn't do for any one to see them.

THE TOFF—Oh, nobody will come this way. We're all alone on a moor.

BILL—Where will we put them?

THE TOFF—Bury them in the cellar, but there's no hurry.

BILL—And what then, Toffy?

THE TOFF—Why, then we'll go to London and upset the ruby business. We have really come through this job very nicely.

BILL—I think the first thing that we ought to do is to give a little supper to old Toffy. We'll bury these fellows to-night.

ALBERT—Yes, let's.

SNIGGERS—The very thing.

BILL—And we'll all drink his health.

ALBERT—Good old Toffy

SNIGGERS—He ought to have been a general or a premier. (*They get bottles from cupboard.*)

THE TOFF—Well, we've earned our bit of a supper. (*They sit down.*)

BILL (*glass in hand*)—Here's to old Toffy who guessed everything.

ALBERT AND SNIGGERS—Good old Toffy.

BILL—Toffy who saved our lives and made our fortunes.

ALBERT AND SNIGGERS—Hear. Hear.

THE TOFF—And here's to Bill, who saved me twice to-night.

BILL—Couldn't have done it but for your cleverness, Toffy.

SNIGGERS—Hear, hear. Hear, hear.

ALBERT—He foresees everything.

BILL—A speech, Toffy. A speech from our general.

ALL—Yes, a speech.

SNIGGERS—A speech.

THE TOFF—Well, get me some water. This whiskey's too much for my head, and I must keep it clear till our friends are safe in the cellar.

BILL—Water. Yes, of course. Get him some water, Sniggers.

SNIGGERS—We don't use water here. Where shall I get it?

BILL—Outside in the garden. (*Exit Sniggers.*)

ALBERT—Here's to fortune.

BILL—Here's to Albert Thomas, Esquire.

ALBERT—And William Jones, Esquire. (*Reënter* SNIGGERS, *terrified.*)

THE TOFF—Hullo, here's Jacob Smith, Esquire, J. P., alias Sniggers, back again.

SNIGGERS—Toffy, I've been a thinking about my share in that ruby. I don't want it.

THE TOFF—Nonsense, Sniggers, nonsense.

SNIGGERS—You shall have it, Toffy, you shall have it yourself, only say Sniggers has no share in this 'ere ruby. Say it, Toffy, say it.

BILL—Want to turn informer, Sniggers?

SNIGGERS—No, no. Only I don't want the ruby, Toffy . . .

THE TOFF—No more nonsense, Sniggers; we're all in together in this. If one hangs we all hang; but they won't outwit me. Besides, it's not a hanging affair; they had their knives.

SNIGGERS—Toffy, Toffy, I always treated you fair, Toffy. I was always one to say, give Toffy a chance. Take back my share, Toffy.

THE TOFF—What's the matter? What are you driving at?

SNIGGERS—Take it back, Toffy.

THE TOFF—Answer me; what are you up to?

SNIGGERS—I don't want my share any more.

BILL—Have you seen the police? (ALBERT *pulls out his knife.*)

THE TOFF—No, no knives, Albert.

ALBERT—What then?

THE TOFF—The honest truth in open court, barring the ruby. We were attacked.

SNIGGERS—There's no police.

THE TOFF—Well, then, what's the matter?

BILL—Out with it.

SNIGGERS—I swear to God . . .

ALBERT—Well?

THE TOFF—Don't interrupt.

SNIGGERS—I swear I saw something *what I didn't like.*

THE TOFF—What you didn't like?

SNIGGERS (*in tears*)—O Toffy, Toffy, take it back. Take my share. Say you take it.

THE TOFF—What has he seen? (*Dead silence, broken only by* SNIGGERS' *sobs. Then stony steps are heard. Enter a hideous* IDOL. *It is blind and gropes its way. It gropes its way to the ruby and picks it up and screws it into a socket in the forehead.* SNIGGERS *still weeps softly; the rest stare in horror. The* IDOL *steps out, not groping. Its steps move off, then stop.*) O great heavens!

ALBERT (*in a childish, plaintive voice*)—What is it, Toffy?

BILL—Albert, it is that obscene idol (*in a whisper*) come from India.

ALBERT—It is gone.

BILL—It has taken its eye.

SNIGGERS—We are saved.

OFF, A VOICE (*with outlandish accent*)—Meestaire William Jones, Able Seaman. (THE TOFF *has never spoken, never moved. He only gazes stupidly in horror.*)

BILL—Albert, Albert, what is this? (*He rises and walks out. One moan is heard.* SNIGGERS *goes to window. He falls back sickly.*)

ALBERT (*in a whisper*)—What has happened?

SNIGGERS—I have seen it. I have seen it. Oh, I have seen it. (*He returns to table.*)

THE TOFF (*laying his hand very gently on* SNIGGERS' *arm, speaking softly and winningly*)—What was it, Sniggers?

SNIGGERS—I have seen it.

ALBERT—What?

SNIGGERS—O!

VOICE—Meestaire Albert Thomas, Able Seaman.

ALBERT—Must I go, Toffy? Toffy, must I go?

SNIGGERS (*clutching him*)—Don't move.

ALBERT (*going*)—Toffy, Toffy. (*Exit.*)

VOICE—Meestaire Jacob Smith, Able Seaman.

SNIGGERS—I can't go, Toffy. I can't go. I can't do it. (*He goes.*)

VOICE—Meestaire Arnold Everett Scott-Fortescue, late Esquire, Able Seaman.

THE TOFF—I did not foresee it. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN

The Ideal Captain

By ARCHILOCHUS

A LONG-LEGGED straddling giant is not my choice for a chief—
Curled and haughty and shaven, a proper sort of a beau;
Give me a bow-legged bantam, stout if his body is brief,
Firm on his feet, quick-witted, full of spirit and go.

"Million" Books and "Best" Books

A Glance Towards the Top of the Fiction America has Read and Produced in Three Hundred Years

By H. W. L.

IT IS easy to agree with the superior attitude which proclaims that all lists of "best" books are futile. "Supreme Art," thundered out Victor Hugo, "is the region of Equals. There is no primacy among masterpieces." And then, be it noted, he goes on, in the very next pages of his most stimulating and least read work,—to pick out the highest peaks of the mountain-range of genius:

> "We repeat it: to choose between these men, to prefer one to the other, to point with the finger to the first among these first, is impossible. All are the Mind. Perhaps, by the strictest measurements—and yet every objection would be legitimate,—one might mark out as the highest among these summits, Homer, Æschylus, Job, Isaiah, Dante and Shakespeare."

Whether in genius or divinity, the moment we humans admit a thing to be immeasurable, at once arises a raging necessity to measure it, by any yardstick we have handy.

Admitting all that can be said as to the lack of finality in such lists, the indefiniteness of standards, and all the rest, one point seems occasionally forgotten: we do "teach literature"—in some hundreds of colleges to half a million young men and women; in some hundreds of thousands of schools to perhaps fourteen million children; in Chautauquas, reading circles, lectures, literary clubs, correspondence courses, and the like.

And the beginning of such teaching is to select, from the millions of books the world has stored up, those which are best worth studying. Once admit the necessity and possibility of choice, and where is the line to be drawn?

Moreover, all such lists are instructive and entertaining—always remembering that they shed more light on the makers than they do on literature. Any one man picking from the World Library measures chiefly himself,—quite as a nation's god measures the spiritual level, the ideals and culture of that nation.

Anyhow, it is a more modest piece of research undertaken here.

It seemed as if it might be of interest to know just what is being taught in our colleges and high schools as regards American fiction, and its comparative rank. So we asked some thousands of these professors and teachers.

The specific point is: if some condescending international critic were to intimate that the United States had not yet produced *anything* really worthy of a place beside the acknowledged masterpieces of fiction,—which ten works by American writers could be selected that would best represent our bid for a permanent place in this section of the world's literature?

About 400 men and women engaged in teaching literature answered the questionnaire.

As to the first six, there was little difference of judgment, though the choice was practically unanimous only with Numbers 1 and 2:

			Published
1.	Tales	Edgar Allan Poe	1839–45
2.	The Scarlet Letter	Nathaniel Hawthorne	1850
3.	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	Mark Twain	1885
4.	The Last of the Mohicans	James Fenimore Cooper	1826
5.	Uncle Remus	Joel Chandler Harris	1881
6.	Moby Dick, or The White Whale	Herman Melville	1851

At this point expected differences of opinion became much in evidence. The seventh book, for example, was picked by less than half as many as agreed on "Moby Dick." But these were the remaining four works selected:

			Published
7.	The Rise of Silas Lapham	William Dean Howells	1885
8.	Ethan Frome	Edith Wharton	1911
9.	Tales	Bret Harte	1870 *et seq.*
10.	Uncle Tom's Cabin	Harriet Beecher Stowe	1852

And since only a few "votes" separated "Uncle Tom" from the next down on the list, it may be worth while to continue with the succeeding fifteen:

11. The Portrait of a Lady ..... Henry James
12. The Red Badge of Courage ..... Stephen Crane
13. The Sketch Book ..... Washington Irving
14. The Virginian ..... Owen Wister
15. My Antonia ..... Willa Sibert Cather
16. Ben Hur ..... Lew Wallace
17. Old Creole Days ..... George W. Cable
18. The House of the Seven Gables ..... Nathaniel Hawthorne
19. Daisy Miller ..... Henry James
20. The Call of the Wild ..... Jack London
21. The Four Million ..... "O. Henry"
22. Rip Van Winkle ..... Washington Irving
23. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer ..... Mark Twain
24. The Legend of Sleepy Hollow ..... Washington Irving
25. Hugh Wynne ..... S. Weir Mitchell

If any readers have ideas concerning the above list which demand expression, I'll be glad to receive them. *But*—it seems beyond question that, so far as young opinions are influenced by school and college, these are the books that Americans are being taught to consider the highest achievement of our native fiction-writers thus far.

That represents the vote of the men and women whose profession it is to teach literature. But there is always going on another sort of more popular plebiscite—the actual buying of novels which people want to read; so perhaps one may say roughly that those books have thus been declared "best" which have "sold a million."

Figures on this are not easily available; but some weeks of labour have produced the following as having been awarded this dollar medal:

		Sales
In His Steps	C. M. Sheldon	*declared to be* 20 million
When a Man's a Man	Harold Bell Wright	*about* 2 million
[*Several others by Mr. Wright have passed the million mark*]		
Freckles	Gene Stratton-Porter	1,900,000
[*Besides others above a million*]		
The Virginian	Owen Wister	*over* 1 million
Ben Hur	Lew Wallace	*about* 1 million
Black Beauty	Anna Sewell	*about* 1 million
The Call of the Wild	Jack London	*about* 1 million
Uncle Tom's Cabin	Harriet Beecher Stowe	*about* 1 million
David Harum	E. N. Westcott	*about* 1 million

By foreign authors, Daudet's "Sappho" and Florence Barclay's "The Rosary" have both passed the mark.

Then follows a group which have had an enormous sale but have just failed to total up this round sum. Probably every volume named below has been purchased by at least three-quarters of a million Americans:

The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come ..... John Fox, Jr.
Barriers Burned Away ..... E. P. Roe
She ..... H. Rider Haggard
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde ..... Robert Louis Stevenson
Looking Backward ..... Edward Bellamy
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn } ..... Mark Twain
The Last of the Mohicans ..... James Fenimore Cooper
The Scarlet Letter ..... Nathaniel Hawthorne
Rip Van Winkle ..... Washington Irving
When Knighthood Was in Flower ..... Charles Major
Alice of Old Vincennes ..... Maurice Thompson
Tales ..... Edgar Allan Poe
Trilby ..... George du Maurier
St. Elmo ..... Mrs. A. J. Wilson
Lena Rivers ..... Mary J. Holmes

Just what these facts evidence, if anything, I cannot say. But I do seem to get some glimpses at the literary mind of the United States as I look over these lists and remember the books themselves.

Colonel Carter of Cartersville

By

F. HOPKINSON SMITH

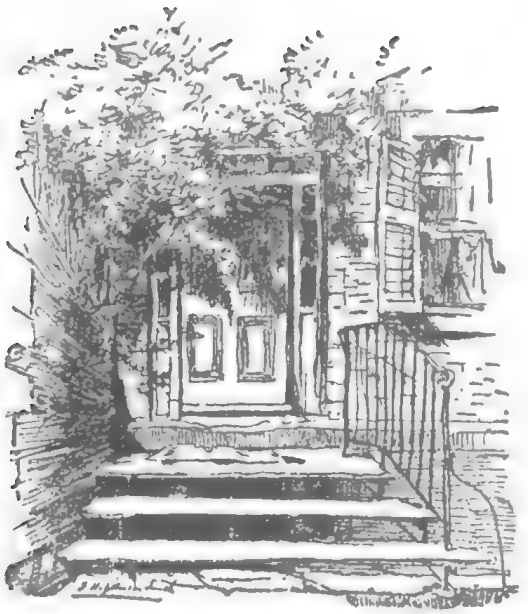


Illustration by F. Hopkinson Smith

CHAPTER IX

A VISIT OF CEREMONY

THE Honourable I. B. Kerfoot, presiding judge of the district court of Fairfax County, Virginia, and the gallant Major Thomas C. Yancey, late of the Confederate Army, had been the colonel's guests at his hospitable house in Bedford Place for a period of six days and six nights when my cards—two—were given to Chad, together with my verbal hopes that both gentlemen were within.

My visit was made in conformity with one of the colonel's inflexible rules,—every guest under his roof, within one week of his arrival, was to be honoured by a personal call from every friend within reach.

No excuse would have sufficed on the ground of flying visits. And indeed, so far as these particular birds of passage were concerned, the occupation was permanent, the judge having taken possession of the only shake-down sofa on the lower floor, and the war-like major having plumped himself into the middle of the colonel's own bed not ten minutes after his arrival. Even to the casual Northern eye, unaccustomed to the prolonged sedentary life of the average Virginian when a guest, there was every indication that these had come to stay.

Chad laid both of my cards on the table, and indulged in a pantomime more graphic than spoken word. He shut his eyes, laid his cheek on one hand, and gave a groan of intense disgust, followed by certain gleeful chuckles, made the more expressive by the sly jerking of his thumb towards the dining-room door and the bobbing up and down of his fore-finger in the direction of the bedroom above.

"Bofe in. Yes, sah! Bofe in, an' bofe abed. Last I yeard from 'em dey was hollerin' for juleps."

I entered the dining-room and stopped short. On a low sofa at the far end of the room lay a man of more than ordinary girth, with coat, vest, and shoes off, his face concealed by a newspaper. From beneath this sheet came, at regular intervals, a long-drawn sound like the subdued puff of a tired locomotive at rest on a side-track. Beside him was an empty tumbler, decorated with a broken straw and a spray of withered mint.

The summer air fanned through the closed blinds of the darkened room, and played with the silvery locks that straggled over the white pillow; the paper rose and fell with a crinkling noise, keeping time to the rhythm of the exhaust. Beyond this there was no movement. The Hon. I. B. Kerfoot was asleep.

I watched the slowly heaving figure for

a moment, picked up a chair, and gently closed the door. I could now look the colonel in the face so far as the judge was concerned. My account with the colonel was settled.

Retiring to the yard outside, which was cool and shady, and, despite its dilapidated appearance, a grateful relief from the glare of the street, I tilted my chair against the dissipated wall, with its damaged complexion of scaling white-wash, and sat down to await the colonel's return.

Meanwhile Chad busied himself about the kitchen, moving in and out the basement door, and at last brought up a great tin pan, seated himself on the lower step, and proceeded to shell peas, indulging all the while in a running commentary on the events of the preceding week.

One charm in Chad's conversation was its clearness. You always absorbed his meaning. Another was its reliability. When he finished you had the situation in full.

First came the duel.

"So dat Ketchem man done got away? Doan' dat beat all! An' de colonel a-makin' his will an' a-rubbin' up his old barkers. Can't have no fun yer naaway; sumpin' allers spiles it. But yer oughter seen de colonel dat day w'en he come home! Sakes alive, warn't he b'ilin'! Much as Jedge Keerfoot could do to keep him from killin' dat Yankee on de street."

Chad's long brown fingers tumbled among the green pea-shells, which he heaped up on one side of the pan, and the conversation soon changed to his master's "second in the field." I encouraged this divergence, for I had been charged by Fitz to find out when these two recent additions to the household in Bedford Place intended returning to their native clime; that loyal friend of the colonel being somewhat disturbed over their preparations for what promised to be a lengthy stay.

"'Fo' de Lawd, I doan' know! Tom Yancey nebber go s'long as de mint patch hol' out, an' de colonel bought putty near a ba'el of it dis mawnin', an' anudder dimijohn from Mister Grocerman. Makes my blood bile to see dese Yanceys, anyhow. See dat carpet bag w'at he fotch wid him? Knowed w'at he had in it w'en he opened its mouf an' de jedge tuk his own clo'es outen it. A pair of carpet slippers, two collars, an' a lot of chicken fixin's. Not a shirt to his back 'cept de one he had on! Had to stay abed yisteddy till I i'oned it. Dar's one of his collars on de line now. Dese yer Yanceys no 'count no way. Beats de lan' how de colonel can put up wid 'em, 'cept his faader was quality. You know de old gineral married twice, de las' time his oberseer's daughter. Dat's her chile—Tom Yancey—'sleep now on de colonel's bed upstairs wid a straw in his mouf like a shote. But de colonel say 'tain't Tom's fault dat he takes after his mammy; he's a Yancey, anyhow. But I tell you, Major, Miss Nancy doan' hav nuffin' much to do wid 'im,—she can't abide 'im."

"How long are they going to stay, Chad?" I asked, wishing to make a definite report to Fitz.

"Doan' know. Ole groun'-hog mighty comf'ble in de hole." And he heaped up another pile of shells.

"Fust night de jedge come he tol' de colonel dat Miss Nancy say we all got to come home when de month's up, railroad or no railroad. Dat was a week ago. Den de jedge tasted dat Madary Mister Grocerman sent, an' I ain't yerd nuffin' 'bout goin' home since. Is you yerd, Major?"

Before I could answer, a shutter opened overhead and a voice came sifting down.

"O Chad! Mix me a julep. And, Chad, bring an extra one for the colonel. I reckon he'll be yer d'reckly."

"Yes, sah," replied Chad, without lifting his eyes from the pan.

Then glancing up and finding the blind closed again, he said to me in a half-whisper:—

"Colonel get his julep when he ax fur it. I ain't caayin' no double drinks to nobody. Dis ain't no camp-meetin' bar."

But Chad's training had been too thorough to permit of his refusing sustenance or attention to any guest of his master's, no matter how unworthy, and it was not many minutes before he was picking over "de ba'el" containing that peculiar pungent variety of plant so common to the graveyards of Virginia.

Before the cooling beverage had been surmounted by its delicate mouthpiece the street gate opened and the colonel walked briskly in.

"Ah, Major! You here? Jest the vehy man we wanted, suh! Fitz and the English agent are comin' to dinner. You have heard the news, of co'se? No? Not about the great syndicate absorbin' the Garden Spots? My dear suh, she's floated! The C. & W. A. L. R. R. is afloat, suh! Proudly ridin' the waves of prosperity, suh. Wafted on by the breeze of success."

"What, bought the bonds?" I said, jumping up.

"Well, not exactly bought them outright, for these gigantic operations are not conducted in that way; but next to it, suh. To-day,"—and he brought his hand down softly on my shoulder,—"to-day, suh, they have cabled their agent—the same gentleman, suh, you saw in my office some time ago—to make a searchin' investigation into the mineral and agricultural resources of that section of my State, with a view to extendin' its railroad system. I quote, suh, the exact words: 'extendin' its railroad system.' Think, my dear Major, of the effect that a colossal financial concern like the great British syndicate would produce upon Fairfax County, backed as it is, suh, by untold millions of stagnant capital absolutely rottin' in English banks! The road is built!" And the colonel in his excitement opened his waistcoat, and began pacing the yard, fanning himself vigorously with his hat.

Chad substituted a palm-leaf fan from the hall table, and, producing a small tray, picked up the frosted tumbler and mounted the three steps to relieve the thirsty guest on the floor above.

As he reached the last step a hand stretched out, and a voice said:—

"Jes what I wanted."

"Dis julep, Jedge, is Major Yancey's."

"All the better." And nodding to the colonel and bowing gravely to me, the Hon. I. B. Kerfoot settled himself on the top of the front steps with very much the same air with which he would have occupied his own judicial bench.

With the exception that this julep was just begun and the other just ended, his Honour presented precisely the same outward appearance as when I discovered him asleep on the sofa.

His was, in fact, the extremest limit of dishabille permissible even on the hottest of summer afternoons in the most retired of back yards,—no coat, no vest, no shoes. In one hand he held a crumpled collar and a high, black silk stock; with the other he grasped the julep. His hair was tousled, his face shriveled up and pinched by his heavy nap, his eyes watery and vague. He reminded me of the man one sometimes meets in the aisle of a sleeping-car when one boards the train at a way station in the night.

"I hope you have had a refreshin' sleep, Jedge," said the colonel. "My friend the major, here, did himself and me the honour of callin' upon you, but findin' that you were restin', suh, he sought the cool of my co'teyard until you should awake."

His Honour looked at me over the edge of his tumbler and bowed feebly. The straw remained glued to his mouth.

"I have been tellin' him, suh, of the extr'o'd'nary boom to-day in Garden Spots, as some of my young friends call the secu'ities of my new road, work upon which will be begun next week."

The announcement made no impression upon the judge, his face remaining sleepily stolid until that peculiar gurgling sound, the death-rattle of a dying julep, caused a shade of sadness to pass over it.

At that instant the shutter again opened overhead.

"Hello, Colonel! Home, are you? Chad, where's my julep? Ah, Major, hope I see you vehy well, suh. Where's Kerfoot?"

That legal luminary craned his head forward as far as it would go without necessitating any additional movement of his body, caught Yancey's eye as he leaned out of the window, and held up the empty glass.

When everybody had stopped laughing the colonel made a critical, but silent examination of the judge, called to Yancey, and said:

"Gentlemen, we do not dine until seven. You will both have ample time to dress."

CHAPTER X

CHAD IN SEARCH OF A COAL-FIELD

THE colonel was the first man downstairs. When he entered I saw at a glance that it was one of his gala nights, for he wore the ceremonial white waistcoat and cravat, and had thrown the accommodating coat wide open. His hair, too, was brushed back from his broad forehead with more than usual care, each silver thread keeping its proper place in the general scheme of iron-gray; while his goatee was twisted to so fine a point that it curled upward like a fishhook. He had also changed his shoes, his white stockings now being incased in low prunellas tied with a fresh ribbon, which hung over the toes like the drooping ears of a lapdog.

The attention which the colonel paid to these particular details was due, as he frequently said, to his belief that a man would always be well dressed who looked after his extremities.

"I can inva'iably, suh, detect the gentleman under the shabbiest suit of clothes, if his collar and stockings are clean. When, besides this, he brushes his hat and blacks

his shoes, you may safely invite him to dinner."

Something like this was evidently passing in his mind as he stood waiting for his guests, his back to the empty grate; for he examined his hands critically, glanced at his shoes, and then excusing himself, turned his face, and taking a pair of scissors from his pocket proceeded leisurely to trim his cuffs.

"These duties of the dressin'-room, my dear Major, should have been attended to in their proper place; but the fact is the jedge is makin' rather an elaborate toilet in honour of our guest, and as Yancey occupies my bedroom, and the jedge is also dressin' there, my own accommodations are limited. I feel sure you will excuse me."

While he spoke the door opened, and his Honor entered in a William Penn style of make-up, ruffled shirt, and all. He really was not unlike that distinguished peacemaker, especially when he carried one of the colonel's long pipes in his mouth. He had, I am happy to say, since leaving the front steps, accumulated an increased amount of clothing. The upper half of the familiar butternut suit—the coat—still clung to him, but the middle and lower half had been supplanted by another waistcoat and trousers of faded nankeen, the first corrugated into wrinkles and the second flapping about his ankles.

The colonel absorbed him at a glance, and with a satisfied air placed a chair for him near the window and handed him a palm-leaf fan.

Last of all came Yancey in a flaming red necktie, the only new addition to his costume—a part, no doubt, of the "chicken fixin's" found by Chad in the carpet bag.

The breezy ex-major, as he entered, seized my hand with the warmth of a lifelong friend; then moving over and encircling with his arm the colonel's coat collar he lowered his voice to a confidential whisper and inquired about the market of the day with as much solicitude as though his last million had been filched from him on insufficient security.

When, a few minutes later, the round-faced man, the agent of the great English syndicate, walked in, preceded by Fitz, nothing could have been more courtly than the way the colonel presented him to his guests—pausing at every name to recount some slight biographical detail complimentary to each, and ending by announcing with great dignity that his honoured guest was none other than the very confidential agent and adviser of a group of moneyed magnates whose influence extended to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The agent, like many other sensible Englishmen, was a bluff, hearty sort of man, with a keen eye for the practical side of life and an equally keen enjoyment of every other, and it was not five minutes before he had located in his round head the precise standing and qualifications of every man in the room.

While Yancey amused him greatly as a type quite new to him, the colonel filled him with delight. "So frank, so courteous, so hospitable; quite the air of a country squire of the old school," he told Fitz afterward.

As a host that night, the colonel was in his happiest vein, and by the time the coffee was served, had succeeded not only in entertaining the table in his own inimitable way, but he had drawn out from each one of his guests, not excepting the reticent Fitz, some anecdote or incident of his life, bringing into stronger relief the finer qualities of him who told it.

Kerfoot in a ponderous way gave the details of a murder case, tried before him many years ago, in which the judge's charge so influenced the jury that the man was acquitted, and justly so, as was afterward proved. Yancey related an incident of the war, where he, only a drummer boy at the time, assisted, at great risk, in carrying a wounded comrade from the field. And Fitz was forced to admit that one of the largest financial operations of the day would have been a failure had he not stepped in at the critical moment and saved it.

Up to this point in the dinner not the slightest reference had been made to the railroad or its interests except by the impetuous Yancey, who asked Fitz what the bonds would probably be worth, and who was promptly silenced by the colonel with the suggestive remark that none were for sale, especially at this time.

When, however, by the direction of the colonel, the cloth was removed and the old mahogany table that Chad rubbed down every morning with a cork was left with only the glasses, a pair of coasters and their decanters,—the Madeira within reach of the judge's hand,—the colonel rose from his chair and spread out on the polished surface a stained and ragged map, labeled in one corner in quaint letters, "Lands of John Carter, Esquire, of Carter Hall." Only then was the colonel ready for business.

"This is the correct survey, I believe, Jedge," said the colonel.

The judge emptied his glass, felt all over his person for his spectacles, found them in the inside pocket of his nankeen waistcoat, and, perching them on the extreme end of his nose, looked over their rims and remarked that the original deeds of the colonel's estate had been based upon this map, and that, so far as he knew, it was correct. Then he added:—

"The partition line that was made immejitly aafter the war, dividin' the estate between Miss Ann Caarter and yo'self, Colonel, was also tuk from this survey."

Fitz conferred with the agent for a moment and then asked the colonel where lay the deposit of coal of which he had spoken.

"In a moment, my dear Fitz," said the colonel, deprecatingly, and turning to the agent:—

"The city of Fairfax, suh, that we discussed this mornin', will be located to the right of this section; the Tench runs here; the iron bridge, suh, should cross at this point," marking it with his thumb-nail. "Or perhaps you gentlemen will decide to have it nearer the Hall. It is immaterial to me."

Then looking at Fitz: "I can't locate the coal, my dear Fitz; but I think it is up here on the hill at the foot of the range."

The agent lost interest immediately in the iron bridge over the Tench, and asked a variety of questions about the deposit, all of which the colonel answered courteously and patiently, but evidently with a desire to change the subject as soon as possible.

The Englishman, however, was persistent, while the judge's last sententious remark regarding the recent subdivision of the estate awakened a new interest in Fitz.

What if this coal should not be on the colonel's land at all! He caught his breath at the thought.

It was Fitz's only chance to restore the colonel's fortunes; and although for obvious reasons he dared not tell him so, it was really the only interest the Englishman had in the scheme at all.

Indeed, the agent had frankly said so to Fitz, adding that he was anxious to locate a deposit of coal somewhere in the vicinity of the line of the colonel's proposed road; because the extension of certain railroads in which the syndicate was interested—not the C. & W. A. L. R. R., however—depended almost entirely upon the purchase of this vital commodity.

Full of these instructions the agent, after listening to a panegyric upon the resources of Fairfax County, interrupted rather curtly a glowing statement of the colonel's concerning the enormous value of the Garden Spot securities by asking this question:

"Are the coal lands for sale?"

Fitz shivered at its directness, fearing that the colonel would catch the drift affairs were taking and become alarmed. His fears were groundless; the shot had gone over his head.

"No, suh! My purpose is to use it to supply our shops and motive power."

"If you should decide to sell the lands I would make an investigation at once," replied the agent, quietly, but with meaning in his voice.

The colonel looked at him eagerly.

"Would you at the same time consider the purchase of our securities?"

"I might."

"When would you go?"

"To-morrow night, or not at all. I return to England in a week."

Yancey and the judge looked at each other inquiringly with a certain anxious expression suggestive of some impending trouble. The judge recovered himself first, and quickly filled his glass, leaving but one more measure in the decanter. This measure Yancey immediately emptied into his own person, as perhaps the only place where it would be entirely safe from the treacherous thirst of the judge.

Fitz read in their faces these mental processes, and was more determined than ever to break up at once what he called "the settlement."

"Are you sho', Colonel," inquired Kerfoot, catching at straws, "that the coal lands lie entirely on yo' father's property? Does not the Barbour lan' jine yo's on the hill?"

"I am not positively sho', suh, but I have always understood that what we call the coal hills belonged to my father. You see," said the colonel, turning to the agent, "this grade of wild lan' is never considered of much value with us, and a few hundred acres mo' or less is never insisted on among old families of our standin' whose estates jine."

Yancey expanded his vest, and said authoritatively that he was quite sure the coal hills were on the Barbour property. He had shot partridges over that land many a time.

The agent, who had listened calmly to the discussion, remarked dryly that until

the colonel definitely ascertained whether he had any lands to sell it would be a useless waste of time to make the trip.

"Quite so," said Kerfoot, raising the emptied decanter to his eye, and replacing it again with a look at Yancey expressive of the contempt in which he held a man who could commit so mean an act.

"But, Colonel," said Fitz, "can't you telegraph to-morrow and find out?"

"To whom, my dear Fitz? It would take a week to get the clerk of the co'te to look through the records. Nobody at Barbour's knows."

"Does Miss Nancy know?"

The colonel shook his head dubiously.

Fitz's face suddenly lighted up as he started from his seat, and caught the colonel by the arm.

"Does Chad?"

"Chad! Yes, Chad might."

Fitz nearly overturned his chair in his eagerness to reach the top of the kitchen stairs.

"Come up here, Chad, quick as your legs can carry you—two steps at a time!"

Chad hurried into the room with the face of a man sent for to put out a fire.

"Chad," said the colonel, "you know the big hill as you go up from the marsh at home?"

"Yes, sah."

"Whose lan' is the coal on, mine or Jedge Barbour's?"

The old darky's face changed from an expression of the deepest anxiety to an effort at the deepest thought. The change was so sudden that the wrinkles got tangled up in the attempt, resulting in an expression of vague uncertainty.

"You mean, Colonel, de hill whar we cotch de big coon?"

"Yes," said the colonel encouragingly, ignorant of the coon, but knowing that there was only one hill.

"Well, Jedge Barbour's niggers always said dat de coon was dere coon, 'ca'se he was treed on dere lan' and we 'sputed dat it was our coon, 'ca'se it was on our lan'."

"Who got the coon?" asked Fitz.

"Oh, *we* got de coon!" And Chad's eyes twinkled.

"That settles it. It's your land, Colonel," said Fitz, with one of his sudden roars, in which everybody joined but Chad and the judge.

"But den, gemmen,"—Chad was a little uncomfortable at the merriment,—"it was our coon for sho'. I knowed whar de line went, 'ca'se I he'p Marsa John caarry de spy-glass when he sold de woodlan's to Jedge Barbour, an' de coon was on our side ob dat line."

If Chad's first statement caused nothing but laughter, the second produced nothing but the profoundest interest.

Here was the surveyor himself!

The colonel turned the map to Chad's side of the table. Every man in the room stood up and craned his head forward.

"Now, Chad," said the colonel, "this map is a plan of our lan'—same as if you were lookin' down on it. Here is the road to Caartersville. See that square, black mark? That's Caarter Hall. This is the marsh, and that is the coal hill. Now, standin' here in the marsh,—this is where our line begins, Fitz,—standin' here, Chad, in the marsh, which side of the line is that hill on? Mine or Jedge Barbour's?"

The old man bent over the table, and scanned the plan closely.

"W'at's dis blue wiggle lookin' like a big fish-wum?"

"That's the Tench River."

Chad continued his search, his wrinkled brown hand, with its extended forefinger capped by its stumpy nail, looking for all the world like a mud turtle with head out crawling over the crumpled surface of the map.

"Scuse me till I run down to de kitchen an' git my spec's. I can't see like"—

"Here, take mine!" said Fitz, handing him his gold ones. He would have lent him his eyes if he could have found that coal-field the sooner.

The turtle crawled slowly up, its head thrust out inquiringly, inched along the margin of the map, and backed carefully down again, pausing for such running commentaries as "Dis yer's de ribber"; "Dat's de road"; "Dis de ma'sh."

The group was now a compact mass, every eye watching Chad's finger as though it were a divining rod—Fitz full of smothered fears lest after all the prize should slip from his grasp; the agent anxious but reserved; Yancey and the judge hovering between hope and despair, with eyes on the empty decanter; and last of all the colonel, on the outside, holding a candle himself, so that his guests might see the better—the least interested man in the room.

Presently the finger stopped, and Chad looked up into his master's face.

"If I was down dar, Marsa George, jes' a minute, I could tole ye, 'ca'se I reckelmember de berry tree whar Marsa John had de spyglass sot on its legs I held de

pole on de rock way up yander on de hill, an' in dat berry rock Marsa John done cut a crotch."

"And which way is the crotch in the rock from the marsh here?" asked Fitz eagerly.

Chad stood up, looked at the plan glistening under the candlelight, paused an instant, then took off the gold-rimmed glasses, and handed them with great deference to Fitz.

"'Tain't no use, Marsa George. I kin go frough dat ma'sh blindfolded in de night an' cotch a possum airy time along airy one ob dem fences; but dis yer foolin' wid lan's on paper is too much for Chad. 'Fo' Gawd, I doan' know!"

CHAPTER XI

CHAD ON HIS OWN CABIN FLOOR

THE night after the eventful dinner in Bedford Place, the colonel, accompanied by his guests, had alighted at a dreary way station, crawled into a lumbering country stage, and with Chad on the box as pilot, had stopped before a great house with ghostly trailing vines and tall chimneys outlined against the sky.

When I left my room on the following morning the sunlight was pouring through the big colonial window, and the breath of the delicious day, laden with the sweet smell of bending blossoms, floated in through the open blinds.

Descending the great spiral staircase with its slender mahogany balusters,—here and there a break,—I caught sight of the entrance hall below with its hanging glass lantern, quaint hair-cloth sofas lining the white walls, and half-oval tables heaped with flowers, and so on through the wide-open door leading out upon a vine-covered porch. This had high pillars and low railings against which stood some broad settles—all white.

The colonel, Fitz, and the English agent were still in their rooms,—three pairs of polished shoes outside their several doors bearing silent witness to the fact,—and the only person stirring was a pleasant-faced negro woman with white apron and gay-coloured bandana, who was polishing the parlour floor with a long brush, her little pickaninny astraddle on the broom end for weight.

I pushed aside the hanging vines, sat down on one of the wooden benches, and looked about me. This, then, was Carter Hall!

The house itself bore evidence of having once been a stately home. It was of plaster stucco, yellow washed, peeled and broken in places, with large dormer windows and sloping roof, one end of which was smothered in a tangle of Virginia creeper and trumpet vine climbing to the very chimney-top.

In front there stretched away what had once been a well-kept lawn, now a wild of coarse grass broken only by the curving line of the driveway and bordered by a row of Lombardy poplars with here and there a gap,—bitten out by hungry camp-fires.

To the right rose a line of hills increasing in height as they melted into the morning haze, and to the left lay an old-fashioned garden,—one great sweep of bloom. With the wind over it, and blowing your way, you were steeped in roses.

I began unconsciously to recall to myself all the traditions of this once famous house.

Yes, there must be the window where Nancy waved good-by to her lover, and there were the flower-beds into which he had fallen headlong from his horse,—only a desolate corner now with the grass and tall weeds grown quite up to the scaling wall, and the wooden shutters tightly closed. I wondered whether they had ever been opened since.

And there under my eyes stood the very step where Chad had helped his old master from his horse the day his sweetheart Henny had been purchased from Judge Barbour, and close to the garden gate were the negro quarters where they had begun their housekeeping. I thought I knew the very cabin.

And that line of silver glistening in the morning light must be the river Tench, and the bend near the willows the spot where the colonel would build the iron bridge with the double span, and across and beyond on the plateau, backed by the hills, the site of the future city of Fairfax.

I left my seat, strolled out into the garden, crossed the grass jeweled with dew, and filled my lungs with the odour of the sweet box bordering the beds,—a rare delight in these days of modern gardens. Suddenly I came upon a wide straw hat and a broad back bending among the bushes. It was Chad.

"Mawnin', Major; fust fox out de hole, is yer? Lawd a massey, ain't I glad ter git back to my ole mist'ess! Lan' sakes alive! I ain't slep' none all night a-thinkin' ober it. You ain't seen my Henny? Dat was her sister's chile rubbin' down de flo'. She come ober dis mawnin' ter help, so many folks here. Wait till I git a basket ob dese

yer ole pink rose-water roses. See how I snip 'em short? Know what I'm gwineter do wid 'em? Sprinkle 'em all ober de tablecloth. I lay dey ain't nobody done dat for my mist'ess since I been gone. But, Major,"—here Chad laid down the basket on the garden walk and looked at me with a serious air,—"I done got dat coal lan' business down to a fine p'int. I was up dis mawnin' 'fo' daylight, an' I foun' dat rock, an' de crotch is dar yit; I scrape de moss offen it myself; an' I foun' de tree too. I ain't sayin' nuffin', but jes you wait till after breakfas' an' dey all go out lookin' for de coal! Jes you wait, dat's all! Chad's on his own cabin flo' now. Can't fool dis chile no mo'."

This was good news so far as it went. Our sudden exodus from Bedford Place had been determined upon immediately after Chad's dismal failure to locate the coal-field: Fitz having carried the day against Yancey, Kerfoot, and even the agent himself, who was beginning to waver under the accumulation of uncertainties.

"Dat's enough roses to bury up de dishes. Rub yo' nose down in 'em. Ain't dey sweet! Now, come along wid me, Major. I done tole Henny 'bout you an' de tar'pins an' de times de gemmen had. Dis way, Major; won't take a minute, an' ef ye all go back to-night,—an' I yerd Mister Englishman say *he* got to go,—you mighn't hab anudder chance. Henny's cookin', ye know. Dis way. Step under dat honeysuckle!"

I looked through an open door and into a dingy, smoke-dried interior, ceiled with heavy rafters, and hung with herbs, red peppers, onions, and the like. This was lighted by three small windows, and furnished with a row of dressers filled with crockery and kitchen ware, and permeated by that savoury smell which presages a generous breakfast. On one side of the fireplace rested the great hominy mortar, cut from a tree trunk, found in all Virginia kitchens, and on the other the universal brick oven with its iron doors,—the very doors, I thought, that had closed over Chad's goose when Henny was a girl. Between the mortar and the oven opened, or rather caverned, a fireplace as wide as the colonel's hospitality, and high and deep enough to turn a coach in. It really covered one end of the room.

Bending over the swinging crane hung with pots and fringed with hooks,—baited so often with good dinners,—stood an old woman with bent back, her gray head bound up with a yellow handkerchief.

"Henny, de major made a special p'int o' comin' to see ye 'fo' he gits his breakfas'."

She looked up and dropped me a curtsey.

"Mawnin', marsa. I ain't much ter see, I'm so ole an' mizzble wid dese yer cricks in my back an' sich a passel o' white folks. How did my Chad git along up dar 'mong de Yankees?"

I gave Chad so good a character that every tooth in his head came out on dress parade, and was about to draw from Henny some of her own experiences,—this loyal old servant whose life from her girlhood to her old age had been one of the romantic traditions of the roof that sheltered her,—when Chad, who had gone out with the roses, returned with the news that the colonel and his guests were breathing the morning air on the front porch, and were much disturbed over my prolonged absence.

The colonel caught sight of me as I rounded the corner, Fitz and the agent joining in his outburst of hilarious welcome, intoxicated as they all were with the elixir of that most exhilarating of all hours—the hour before breakfast of a summer morning in the country.

"Welcome, my dear Major," called the colonel; "a hearty welcome to Caarter Hall! Come up here where you can get a view of Fairfax, suh!" and by the time I had mounted the steps he was leaning over the railing, with Fitz on the one side and the agent on the other, sweeping the horizon with his index finger and drawing imaginary curves and building bridges and locating railroad stations in the air with as much confidence and hope as if he really saw the gangs of labourers at work across the fields, their shovels glinting in the dazzling sunlight.

"Jes cast yo' eyes, suh,"—this to the agent,—"and tell me, suh, if you have ever in yo' world-wide experience seen such a location for a great city. Level as a flo', watered by the Tench, and sheltered by a line of hills that are beauty itself—it is made for it, suh!"

The agent did full justice to the natural advantages and then asked:

"Is the coal in that range?"

"No, suh; the coal is behind us on an outlyin' spur. I will take you there after breakfast."

And then followed a brief description of the changes the war had made in the homestead, the burning of the barns, the abandonment of the quarters, the destruction of the lawns—"A yard for their damnable wagons, suh"; the colonel pointing out with

great delight the very dent in the ridge where General Early had ridden through and captured the whole detachment without the loss of a man.

While we were talking, that same rustling of silk that I had learned to know so well in Bedford Place was heard in the hall, then a sweet, cheery voice giving some directions to Chad, and the next instant dear Aunt Nancy—Fitz and I had long since dared to call her so—floated (she never seemed to walk) out upon the porch with a word and a curtsey to the agent, a hand each to Fitz and me, and a kiss for the colonel.

Then came the breakfast, and such a breakfast! The outpourings of a Virginia kitchen, with the table showered with roses, and the great urn shining and smoking, and the relays of waffles and cornbread and broiled chicken; all in the old-fashioned dining-room, with its high wainscoting, spindle-legged sideboards, and deep window seats; the long moon-faced clock in the corner—and the rest of it! After that the quiet smoke under the vine-covered end of the portico with the view towards Cartersville.

"There comes the jedge," said the colonel, pointing to a cloud of dust following a two-wheel gig, "and Major Yancey behind on horseback." (They had both been dropped outside their respective garden gates the night before.) "Now, gentlemen, as soon as my attorney arrives with the surveys and deeds we will adjourn to my library and locate this coal-field."

Yancey's horse proved, on closer inspection, to be the remnant of an army mule with a moth-eaten mane and a polished tail bare of hair—worn off, no doubt, in a lifelong struggle with the Fairfax County fly. The major was without the luxury of a saddle, some one having borrowed the only one the owner of the mule possessed, and his breeches, in consequence, were half way up his knees. The judge arrived in better shape, the gig being his own and fairly comfortable,—the same he rode to circuit, a yellow-painted vehicle washed only when it rained,—and the horse the property of the village livery man, who had a yearly contract with his Honour for its use.

Chad was waiting on the flagstones surrounded by some stray pickaninnies when the procession stopped, and assisted the major to alight, with as much form and ceremony as if he had been the best mounted gentleman in the land. The saddleless fragment was then led to a supporting fence. The judicial equipage was accorded the luxury of a shed, where the annual contract was served with a full measure of oats—Chad's recognition of his more exalted station.

The judge bowed gracefully and with great dignity, and with the air of a chief justice entering the court room; then preceding the colonel and his guests,—without a word having fallen from his lips,—he entered a small room opening into the parlour. There he placed upon a chair certain mysterious-looking packages, long and otherwise, one a tin case, which he uncapped, spreading its contents upon a table.

It proved to be another and larger map than the one Chad had pored over, and showed distinctly the boundary lines between two dots marked "Oak" and "Rock" dividing the Carter and Barbour estates.

Up to this time Fitz and the agent had preserved the outward appearance of two idle gentlemen visiting a friend in the country, with no interest beyond the fresh air and the environments of a charming hospitality. With the unrolling of this map, however, and the discovery of the very boundary points insisted on by Chad in Bedford Place, their excitement could hardly be suppressed. The agent broke loose first.

"Before we find out, Colonel Carter, to whom this coal belongs, which may take some valuable time, I want to examine the quality of the vein itself. I would like to go now."

"By all means, suh; and my people shall go with us," said the colonel, turning to Kerfoot with instructions to bring Chad and all the maps later. Yancey excused himself on the ground of the heat. Then donning a wide straw hat and picking up a cane,—something he never used in New York,—the colonel led the way through the rear door, across a stone wall, and up a hill covered with a second growth of timber.

The experienced eye of the Englishman took in the lay of the land at a glance, and beckoning Fitz go one side he stooped and picked something from the ground which he examined carefully with a magnifying glass. Then they both disappeared hurriedly over the hill.

When they returned, half an hour later, the perspiration was rolling from the agent, and Fitz's eyes were blazing. Both were loaded down with bundles of broken bits of rock, tied up in their several hand-

kerchiefs, large enough to start a geological collection in a country museum.

"What is it, Fitz—diamonds?" I said, laughing.

"Yes; black ones at that." He was almost breathless. "Solid bed of bituminous! Clear down to China! Don't breathe a word yet, for your life!"

The agent was calmer. The coal-bed, he said, seemed to be of more than ordinary richness, and as far as he could judge lay in a vein of generous width. He was ready for the survey, and would like the boundary points located at once.

The next instant Chad's head peered through the tangled underbrush. He carried the roll of maps, the judge, who followed, contenting himself with a package tied with red tape.

The old darky's face was one broad grin from ear to ear.

The judge unrolled a map and placed it on a flat rock with a stone at each corner. Then he untied the package, selected an ink-stained and faded document marked "Deed—John Carter to E. A. Barbour," and ran his eye along the quaint page, reading as he went:

Starting from an oak, blazed diamond C, . . ., along a line S. E. to a rock marked C cross B, C+B, in all a distance of 1,437 linear feet.

"Now, Chad, we will fust find the tree," said the judge, looking around for his map-bearer. "Where's that nigger? Chad!"

The old man had disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed him up. The next minute we heard a faint halloo below us near the edge of a small swamp. A man was waving his hat and shouting:

"Eve'ybody come yer!"

Fitz started on a run, and the agent and I followed on the double-quick. At the end of a crooked stone wall, half surrounded by water, was a great spreading oak, its branches reaching half way across the narrow marsh. Within touching distance of the yielding ground stood Chad pointing to a smooth blaze, stained and overgrown with lichen.

It bore this mark, . . !

"It tallies to a dot. Now, Chad, the rock! the rock!" said Fitz, hardly able to contain himself.

The darky pointed straight up the hill, the sky line of which could be seen entire from where we stood, and indicated an isolated rock jutting out above the tree-tops.

I thought Fitz would have hugged him.

"How do you know it is the rock with the crotch in it? Speak, you grinning lunatic!"

"I was dar dis mawnin' by daylight."

"What's it marked?" said Fitz, catching him by both shoulders. "What's it marked? Quick!"

"Wid a C an' a cross an' a B—so." And the old man traced it with his finger in the mud.

"Every pound of coal on the colonel's land!" said Fitz, with a yell that brought his host and Kerfoot as fast as their legs could carry them.

"Stop!" said Kerfoot. "This only settles the Caarter and Barbour division. There was another division here a year ago between Miss Ann Caarter and the colonel. With that I am mo' familiar, for I drew the deeds, which are here," holding up a bundle; "and I was also present with the surveyor. You are wrong, Mr. Fitzpatrick; this entire hill outside the Barbour division is Miss Ann Caarter's, and the coal is on her land. The colonel's portion is back there along the Tench."

CHAPTER XII

THE ENGLISHMAN'S CHECK

An hour later I found Fitz flat on the grass under one of the apple-trees behind the house, completely broken up by the discoveries of the morning.

After all his work, here was the colonel worse off than ever. Nobody could tell what a woman would do. Aunt Nancy was better than the average (Fitz was a bachelor), but then she had peculiar old family notions about selling land, and ten chances to one she would not sell a foot of it, and there right in the house sat a man with his pocket full of blank checks, any one of which was good for a million of pounds sterling. Even if she did sell it, she would pension the dear old fellow off on a stipend instead of an establishment. He wanted somebody to dig a hole and cover Fitzpatrick up. Anybody could see that the railroad scheme was deader than a last year's pass, the farm hopeless, and the house fast becoming a ruin. It was enough to make a man jump off a dock.

Fitz's tirade was interrupted by Chad, who appeared with a message. The colonel wanted everybody in the library.

When we entered, the judge occupied the head of the table, surrounded by law papers, all of which were opened. The

agent was bending over him, reading attentively, and entering extracts in his notebook. Every one became seated.

"Mr. Fitzpatrick," said the agent, "I have spent an hour with Judge Kerfoot going over the title of this property, and I am prepared to make a proposition for its purchase. I have reduced it to writing,"—picking up a half-sheet of foolscap from the table—"and I submit it to the owners through you."

Fitz read it without changing a muscle, and handed it to the colonel. Yancey and the judge craned forward to catch the first syllables.

The colonel read it to the end, getting paler and paler as its meaning became clear, and then, with a certain pathos in his voice that was childlike, it was so genuine, said:

"If this is accepted, I presume, suh, you will not look any further into my road?"

"You are right. My instructions cover only the purchase of this deposit. I have room for only one operation."

The colonel rose from his chair, steadied himself on the low window-sill, and looked out across the Tench. The silence was oppressive—only the ticking of the clock in the next room and the bees among the flowers outside.

"Wait until I return," he said, crumpling the paper.

In a moment he was back, leading in his aunt by the hand. Miss Nancy entered with a half-puzzled look on her face, which deepened into certain anxiety as she began to realize the pronounced formality of the proceedings. The colonel cleared his throat impressively.

"Nancy, an investigation begun in New York by my dear friend Fitz, and completed here to-day, results in the discov'ry that what you have always considered as slight outcroppin's of coal, and wuthless, is really of vehy great value." The colonel here unbuttoned his coat, and threw out his chest. "A syndicate of English capitalists have, through our guest, offered you the sum of one hundred thousand dollars for the coal-hill, with a royalty of ten cents per ton for every ton mined over a certain amount, one thousand dollars to be paid now and the balance on the search of the title and signin' of the contract. I believe I have stated it correctly, suh?"

The agent bowed his head, and scrutinized Miss Nancy's face with the eye of a hawk.

The dear lady sank into a chair. For a moment she lost her breath. Yancey handed her a fan with a quickness of movement never seen in him before, and the colonel continued:

"This will of course still leave you, Nancy, this house and about half of the farm property transferred to you by me at the fo'closure sale."

The little woman looked from one to the other in a dazed sort of way, and her eye rested on Fitz.

"What shall I do, Mr. Fitzpatrick? It seems to me a grave step to sell any part of the estate."

Fitz blushed at the mark of her confidence, and said that with the royalty clause he thought the proposition a favourable one.

"And you, George?" turning to the colonel.

The colonel bowed his head. He must advise its acceptance.

"When do you want an answer, sir?"

"To-day, Madam," said the Englishman, who had not taken his eyes from her face.

"You shall have it in half an hour," she said gently, then rose hastily, and left the room.

I looked at the colonel. Whatever great wave of disappointment had swept over him when his own idol was broken, there was no trace of it in his face. Even the change this sudden influx of wealth into the family might make in his own condition never seemed to have crossed his mind. He did not follow her. He simply waited. Between his own plans and his aunt's good fortune there was but one course for him.

The room took on the whispered silence of a court awaiting an overdue jury. Fitz was still incredulous and still anxious, saying to me in an undertone that he felt sure she would either refuse it altogether or couple it with some conditions that the agent could not accept; either would be fatal. Yancey and the judge, who had been partly paralyzed at the rapidity of the transaction, conferred in a corner, while the agent proceeded to make a copy of the proposition with as much composure as if he bought a coal-mine every day. The colonel sat by himself, his chair tilted back, his eyes half closed.

In the midst of this uncertainty Chad entered with a message. "Miss Nancy wants de colonel." In five minutes more he entered with another. Miss Nancy wanted Fitz and me.

We followed the old servant up the winding staircase and down the long hall, past the old-fashioned wardrobe and the great

chintz-covered lounge, waited until Chad knocked gently, and entered the dear lady's bedroom.

She sat near the window by the side of the high-post bedstead, rocking gently to and fro. The colonel was standing with his back to the light, coat open, thumbs in his armholes, face beaming.

"I sent for you," she began, "because I want you both to hear my answer before I inform the agent. The land only was mine, and but for your love and devotion to the colonel would still be a wild hill. The coal, therefore, belongs to him. Go and tell the Englishman I accept his offer. The land and all the coal I give to George."

When, an hour later, the transaction was complete, the receipts and preliminary contracts signed, and the small, modest-looking check—the first instalment—had been transferred from the plethoric bank-book of the agent to the narrow, poverty-stricken pocket of the colonel, and the fact began to dawn simultaneously upon everybody that at last the dear old colonel was independent, an enthusiasm took possession of the room that soon became uncontrollable.

Fitz caught him in his arms, and began hugging him in a way that endangered every rib in his body, calling out all the time that he had never felt so good in all the days of his life. Yancey and Kerfoot, who had stood one side appalled by the magnitude of the sum paid, and who, during the signing of the papers had looked at the colonel with the same sort of silent awe with which they would have regarded any other potentate rolling in estates, mines, and millions, broke through the enforced reserve, and exclaimed, with an outburst, that the South was looking up, and that a true Southern gentleman had come into his own, the judge adding with emphasis that the colonel had never looked so much like his noble father as when he stooped over and signed that receipt. Even the Englishman, hard, practical fellow that he was, congratulated him on his good fortune in a few short words that jumped out hot from his heart.

With this atmosphere about him it is not to be wondered that the colonel lost the true inwardness of the situation. The fact that his aunt's boundary line included every acre of valuable land on the plantation, while his own poor portion only bordered the Tench, was to him simply one of those trifling errors which sometimes occur in the partition of vast landed estates. And although, when the gift was made, he felt more than ever her loving-kindness, he could not now, on more mature reflection and after hearing the encomiums of his friends, really see how she could have pursued any other course.

And yet, with the sale accomplished and he rich beyond his wildest dreams, he was precisely the same man in bearing, manner, and speech that he had been in his impecunious days in Bedford Place. He was rich then—in hopes, in plans, in the reality of his dreamland. He was no richer now. The check in his pocket made no difference.

The only perceptible change was when he recounted to me his plans for the restoration of the homestead and the comfort of its inmates. "I shall rebuild the barns and cabins, and lay out a new lawn. The po'ch"—looking up—"needs some repairs, and the ca'iage-house must be enlarged. The coaching days are not over yet, Major; Nancy must have——"

Chad, entering with a luncheon for the exhausted circle, diverted the colonel's train of thought, cutting short his summary. For a moment he watched his old servant musingly, then following him into the next room he called him to one side, and with marked tenderness in his manner unfolded the Englishman's check.

The old servant put down the empty tray, adjusted his spectacles, and examined it carefully.

"What's dis, Marsa George?"

"A thousand dollars, Chad."

"Golly! Monst'ous quare kind o' money. Jes' a scrap. Ain't big enough to wad a gun, is she? An' Misser Englishman gib ye dis for dat ole brier patch?"

Chad was trembling all over, full to the very eyelids.

The colonel held out his hand. The old servant bent his head, his master's hand fast in his. Then their eyes met.

"Yes, Chad, for you and me. There's no hard work for you any mo', old man. Go and tell Henny."

That night at dinner, Fitz on the colonel's right, the Englishman next to Aunt Nancy, Kerfoot, Yancey, and I disposed in regular order, Chad noiseless and attentive, the colonel arose in his chair, radiant to the very tip ends of his cravat, and, in a voice which trembled as it rose, said:

"Gentlemen, the events of the day have unexpectedly brought me an influx of wealth far beyond my brightest anticipations. This is due in great measure to the untirin' brain and vast commercial resources

of my dear friend, Mr. Fitzpatrick, who has laboured with me durin' my sojourn Nawth in the development of these properties, and who now, with that unselfishness which characterizes his life, refuses to accept any share in the result.

"They have also strengthened the tie existin' between my old friend the major on my left, who oftentimes when the day was darkest has cheered me by his counsel and companionship.

"But, gentlemen, they have done mo'." The colonel's feet now barely touched the floor. "They have enabled me to provide for one of the loveliest of her sex—she who graces our boa'd—and to enrich her declinin' days not only with all the comforts, but with many of the luxuries she was bawn to enjoy.

"Fill yo' glasses, gentlemen, and drink to the health of that greatest of all blessings,—a true Southern lady!"

Wanted: A History of Western Painting

From a Lecture by John La Farge

IT WAS brought to me but a few months ago that we still had no codified history of painting. . . . A Japanese gentleman wrote to me in the name of the head of an Imperial school of art, asking me in what work he would find an explanation of the European art of painting. And I had to tell him that there was no such work. . . .

I explained that we were entangled in many conflicting traditions for which a general solution had not been formulated. That, in the first place, as he knew, European art had at a certain moment actually undertaken scientific study as necessary to its own development; that one of its great leaders had abandoned art for a scientific view of the world. I meant Leonardo. That many of the early students of anatomy were among the artists. That our art of painting had involved gradually the use of everything that the sight could employ: things which the Japanese had done without. That modern art, for instance, was now entangled with scientific studies of light and colour,—laws always at the basis of all painting. We had, I told him, no adequate account of these developments.

I told him that for each transition in our art of painting there had been necessarily special technical developments, even down to the different uses of paints, of canvases or surfaces to paint on, or brushes to paint with, and that from his own special Japanese knowledge he would know that an appreciation of these details was inseparable from the results. We had, it is true, certain historic accounts of the use of pigments, but that they were especially unknown to painters; and also, that these accounts were in the form of chronicles—if one might say so,—and not based on any general theory of the necessities implied in each case. We had, as they had in Japan, histories of certain painters, and that of late (as in Japan) attention was being paid to the methods of certain painters, so that the manner of their expression by the use of their hands and the use of their materials was being classified. But that only a very little had been done this way. Also, that we were only beginning now to connect the artist with his surroundings; the intimate personality of each prominent artist which had determined, after all, the particular appeal to our soul made by each one. That the most famous of all, Michael Angelo, was only just beginning to be disentangled from the use made of him; that the next greatest one, Rembrandt, was also merely beginning to be understood. . . . That, therefore, there was no general history of the development of painting as caused by the necessities of the time, the use of materials, and the mental and physical make-up of the artist.

Therefore, I urged him to incite some Japanese to do such a thing, all the more that they were disinterested and had not to undertake the defense or the praise of anything, because of outside reasons. I said to him also, that the appreciation of quality, which was the great factor in the artistic criticism of Japan, had become less and less important to us, and that we even cared little for the lasting of our work; and more than that, that in decorative work the commercial spirit had so taken hold of us, that we prepared it so that it might not last long. I told him how regardless architects were of the quality of materials used, and that few, if any, would prefer a wall painted by Titian to a wall painted by any commercial firm, provided it cost enough. . . .

Now, under these epigrams, these shorthand statements of facts, there lay the truth. Such comprehensive study of one of the arts of which we know the most, has yet to be made. What more splendid object could there be for the great net of university teaching?

The Plague in Bergamo

By JENS P. JACOBSEN

Translated by Haldor Logan

THERE was Old Bergamo up on top of a low mountain, in shelter of walls and gates, and there was New Bergamo down by the foot of the mountain open to all winds.

One day the plague broke out down there in the new town and spread terribly. Many people died, and the rest took flight out over the plains to all four corners of the earth.

And the people of Old Bergamo set fire to the deserted town to clean the air. But it did not help. They began to die up there also, first one a day, then five, then ten, then a score, and when it was at its worst many more than that.

And they could not flee as those in the new town had done.

True, there were those who tried, but they had to live the life of hunted beasts, hiding in ditches and culverts, in hedges and in the green fields; for the farmers, who both in one place and another had had the plague brought into their homes by the first who fled, now stoned away from their land every stranger they saw, or killed them as they would a mad dog, without pity or mercy, in justified self-defense, as they thought.

So they had to stay where they were, the people of Old Bergamo. And day by day the weather grew hotter, and day by day the terrible disease grew greedier and greedier in its grip. The terror increased as unto madness, and it was as if the earth had opened up and swallowed what there had been or order and decency, and sent the worst in its stead.

Right in the beginning, when the plague started, the people had worked together in unity and concord. They had watched that the bodies were well and properly buried, and had each day taken care that big fires were lit in the open squares and in the market places, so that the cleansing smoke could drift through the streets.

Juniper-berries and vinegar had been distributed to the poor; and, above anything else, the people had been seeking the churches early and late, singly and in processions. Every day had they gone before God with their prayers, and every evening when the sun was setting in the mountains, all the bells of all the churches had sent their cries for help toward heaven from their hundreds of swinging mouths.

Days of fasting and of penance had been ordered, and the sacred relics were every day exposed on the altars.

Finally, on a day when they did not know what more to do, they had, to the sounds of trombones and trumpets, proclaimed from the balcony of the City Hall, the Holy Virgin as *podesta* or ruler of the town, now and forever.

But it all brought no help; there was nothing that helped.

Gradually the people came to understand this, and little by little they became firm in the faith that heaven either could not or would not help, and then they not only gave up the fight because "everything happens as it has to happen": no, it was as if Sin, instead of being a thing veiled, sneaking in the darkness, had become a thing brazen, dancing naked in the daylight, a spiritual plague destroying souls as that other was killing bodies. So incredible were their misdeeds, so immense their perversities.

The air was full of blasphemies and ungodliness, of the groans of gluttons and of the screams of drunkards, and the wildest night could not be darker with obscenity than their days were.

"To-day we will eat, for to-morrow we die." It was as if they had set that theme

to music to be played on a multitude of instruments in one ceaseless, hellish concert.

Yes, if all possible sins had not already been invented, they would have been found here, for there was nothing they did not do in their perversity.

The most unnatural vices flourished among them, and even such strange sins as necromancy, sorcery and invocation of the devil were well known to them, for there were many who thought that they might receive from the powers of hell the protection that heaven had refused.

All that there had been of kindness and pity in the minds and hearts of people disappeared. Nobody took thought of anybody but himself.

The sick were looked upon as the common enemy, and if it happened to an unfortunate that he fell in the street, overcome with the first dizziness of the disease, then not a door was opened to him, but with sticks and with stones the dying one was forced to drag himself out of the way.

Day by day the plague increased. The summer sun sent its burning heat down over the town, not a breeze stirred; and from the bodies that were rotting in the houses and from the bodies that were poorly buried in the ground there rose up a stench that mixed with the air hanging heavy in the street, and drew crows and ravens in swarms and clouds, till the walls and the roofs were black with them.

And here and there on the big wall around the town perched great, solitary, mysterious, foreign-looking birds with cruel beaks, and with claws poised as though in hopeful expectation. They sat there and stared with their quiet, greedy eyes as if they were only waiting for the moment when the whole unhappy town should be one big carcass-heap.

It was on the last day of the eleventh week after the plague had broken out that the watchmen in the towers, and others who were up on high places, saw a strange procession winding its way from the plains into the streets of the new town, between the smoke-blackened stone walls and the dark ash-heaps left of the frame houses.

A great multitude! Surely about six hundred or more, men and women, old and young; and they carried large, black crosses, and big banners waved high over them, red as fire and blood. They sing as they go, and strange tones, full of wailing and despair, are carried up through the close, sultry air.

Brown and grey and black are their robes, and all of them have a red sign on their breasts. A cross it is seen to be, when they come nearer.

For they are all the time coming nearer. They press up along the steep, wall-enclosed road that leads up to the old town. It is as a sea of white faces coming. They have scourges in their hands. There is a rain of fire painted on their red banners. And the black crosses swing from one side to another in the throng.

A smell goes up from the close-marching crowd, of sweat, of ashes, of dust from the road, and of old incense. They do not sing any more, neither do they speak: there is only the sound of their naked feet pattering like a herd of sheep.

Face by face they dive into the darkness of the great gateway under the tower; up they come again into the light at the other side. Their faces seem tired of light, their eyelids are half closed.

The song begins again: a *miserere*, and they grip their scourges harder, and they walk faster as if marching to a song of war.

As if they came from a famished city do they look. Their cheeks are hollow, the cheek-bones are sticking out. Their lips are bloodless; they have dark rings around their eyes.

The people of Bergamo have been running together, and are looking at them with a feeling of uneasiness and wonder.

Red, dissipated faces stand out against pale ones; dim eyes, dulled by dissipation, are lowered before eyes that burn as flames. With gaping mouths, grinning blasphemers are listening to the hymns.

And there is BLOOD on these scourges of theirs!

A kind of shuddery feeling came over the towns-people as they watched these strangers. But it did not take long before that impression was shaken off.

Somebody had recognized among the crusaders a half-crazy shoemaker from Brescia, and at once everybody in the procession was made ridiculous through him. However, it was something new, a diversion from the things of every day; and so, when the strangers marched toward the cathedral, everybody followed, as they would have followed a troupe of jugglers or a tame bear.

But as a man would be elbowing his way along with the crowd, he would be getting angry. He felt himself so sober before the solemnity of these people. He knew very well that these shoemakers and tailors had come to try to convert him, to pray for

him, and to speak the kind of words he did not care to listen to.

And there were two thin, gray-haired philosophers who had organized the whole system of ungodliness. Now they stirred up the people and egged them on in the malice of their hearts, so that for each step they came nearer to the church the attitude of the crowd became more threatening, their angry outbursts wilder, and it lacked but little to drive them to lay violent hands on these uninvited flagellants.

Not a hundred steps from the cathedral, the doors of a tavern swung open and a crowd of carousers tumbled out, one on top of another. And they put themselves in the lead of the procession, and they led it, singing and yelling and with clownish gestures of reverence, except one of them, who turned somersaults all the way up the grass-grown steps to the church.

Then of course everybody had to laugh, and all came peacefully into the Holy House.

It was a strange feeling to be there again, and to walk anew up through this great, cool room, with its air rank from old smoke of wax candles, over these sunken stone-squares one's feet knew so well, and over these marble slabs with the worn ornaments and inscriptions one's mind had so often tired of.

And while now the eye, half curious, half unwilling, let itself be lured to rest in the soft half-light beneath the arches, or to glide over the soft beauty of dusty gold and smoke-dulled colours, or become absorbed in the strange shadows in the corners of the sanctuary, there rose a kind of longing in one's heart that would not be kept down.

The revellers from the tavern carried on up at the High Altar, and a young man, a big, strong butcher, had taken off his white apron and tied it around his neck so that it hung down his back as a chasuble; and then he started a mockery of the holy mass, in the wildest, craziest words, full of obscenity and blasphemy. And a little, fat man, old but quick and nimble for all his fatness, and with a face like a skinned pumpkin, was the deacon, and sang as responses all the suggestive street songs known in the land; and he knelt and, turning his back, he genuflected in mockery. He rang the consecration bell as a fool's bell, and he made rings all around himself swinging the censer; and the other drunkards were lying on the kneeling cushions at the altar-rail, screaming with laughter, hiccoughing with drink.

And the whole church laughed and yelled, and crowded over the strangers, and called out to them to look well, so that they would know just how much their God was regarded here in Old Bergamo!

It was not so much because they had anything against God that they applauded these indecencies. No, it was because they enjoyed the feeling of the unspeakable pain the blasphemies were giving these "saints."

In the midst of the nave stood the "saints," and they groaned in their agony; their hearts were boiling with hate and with thirst for revenge. With eyes and hands lifted they prayed to God, that He would revenge himself for all the scorn that was heaped upon Him here in His own holy house.

Gladly would they perish together with these blasphemers if He would only show His power. In an ecstacy of the sweetest desire would they be crushed under His heel, if He would only triumph and if only they might hear terror and despair and remorse that was too late, screaming from these ungodly mouths.

And so again they sang a *miserere:* one that in each note raised a cry for that rain of fire that came down over Sodom, for the strength of Samson when he tore down the Philistine temple.

They prayed in song and in words; they stripped their backs and prayed with their scourges.

There they were, kneeling in row upon row, naked to their loins, swinging the knobs of their whips with their iron teeth against their blood-striped backs. In their wild frenzy they hit so that the blood was dripping from the screaming scourges.

Each stroke was a sacrifice to God. Oh, that they could only hit harder, that they could only tear themselves into thousands of bloody pieces right here before His eyes!

This body with which they had sinned against His commandments deserved to be punished, tortured, destroyed, that He could see how they hated it, that He could see how they were dogs to please Him, lower than dogs under His will, the lowest creeping things eating dust under His foot-sole. So, stroke after stroke, until the arms fell exhausted, or until cramps knit them into knots.

There they were, lying row upon row with eyes that glittered in madness, with clouds of foam around their mouths, with blood streaming down their flesh.

And those who were looking at all this suddenly felt their hearts beating, felt the heat rising in their cheeks, felt their breath

coming heavily. It was as if something cold was tightening their scalps; as if their knees were trembling. For this was gripping them. In their brains were little points of madness that understood this lunacy.

This: to feel oneself as the slave of a mighty, stone-hard God, to fling oneself before His feet, to be His, not in weak piety, not in gentle prayers' idleness; no, to be it in madness, in a delirium of self-abasement, in blood and in screams, and under the blood-dripping scourges; something in them could understand that. Even the butcher became still, and the toothless philosophers bent their gray heads before the eyes they saw around them.

And it became very still there in the church; only a little ripple passed through the crowd.

And one stood up among the strangers, a young monk, up above them, and spoke.

He was pale as a sheet. His black eyes burned as a coal about to go out. The dark, pain-hardened furrows around his mouth were as if cut with a knife in wood, and not as lines in a human face. He stretched his thin, pitiful hands up toward heaven in prayer, and the black sleeves of his cassock slid down over his white, gaunt arms.

Then he spoke.

About hell he spoke; that it is infinite as heaven is infinite, about the solitary world of pain each one of the damned has to suffer through and to fill with his screams; lakes of burning sulphur there were, fields of scorpions, flames that folded themselves around one as a cloak, hard flames that bored into one as the point of a spear which is turned in the wound.

There was a great stillness. Breathless were they listening to his words, for he spoke as if he had seen it all with his own eyes. And they asked themselves: Is not this one of the damned who has been sent up to us out of the mouth of hell to bear witness to us?

A long time he preached about the law and the hardness of the law, that each jot and each tittle of it must be fulfilled, and how they would have to pay, for each transgression, everything they owned, until the very last farthing.

"'But Christ is dead for our sins,' you say, 'we are no more under the law.' But I say unto you that hell will not be cheated out of one single one of you, and not one single one of the iron teeth on the torture-wheel of hell will spare your flesh.

"You rely upon Golgotha's Cross! Come! Come to see it! I shall take you right to its foot.

"It was on a Friday, as you know, that they forced Him out through one of the gates, and laid the heaviest end of a cross on His shoulders and made Him carry it to a naked, barren hill outside the city. And they followed in crowds and stirred up the dust with their many feet so that it hung as a red cloud over the place.

"And they tore His clothes off Him, and stripped His body, and they threw Him down on His cross, and they stretched Him out on it and hammered a nail of iron through each of His hands, and a nail through His crossed feet. With heavy mallets hammered they the nails, through, right to the head.

"Then they raised the cross in a hole in the earth, but it would not stand up straight, so they rocked it to and fro and forced wedges and pegs down around it. And those who were doing it bent down the visors of their helmets, that the blood from His hands should not drip in their eyes.

"And He up there on the cross looked down upon the soldiers casting lots about His seamless robe, and upon the whole yelling mob that He was suffering for in order that they might be saved. And there was not one eye moist with pity in the whole crowd.

"And those down below looked up at Him hanging there, so suffering and weak; they looked upon the board over His head on which it was written 'THE KING OF THE JEWS,' and they mocked Him and cried up to Him: 'Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself! If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross!'

"Then anger rose hot in the heart of God's high-born Son and He saw that they were not worth saving, those crowds that filled the earth. And He tore His feet loose over the head of the nail, and He closed His fists around the nails and tore them out while the arms of the cross bended as does a bow, and He sprang down upon the ground and tore His coat away from the soldiers, so the dice flew over the brow of Golgotha, and He threw His robe around Him, angry as a king, and ascended into heaven. And the cross stood there empty, and the great work of atonement was never accomplished.

"There is nobody to intercede between God and us; there is no Jesus dead for us upon the cross, *there is no Jesus dead for us*

upon the cross, THERE IS NO JESUS DEAD FOR US UPON THE CROSS!"

Then silence.

At the last words, he had bent out over the multitude; both with his lips and with his hands he had, as it were, thrown his statement at their heads, and a moan of fear went through the church, and in the corners people began to sob.

Then the butcher forced his way to the front, and with his hands lifted high, threatening, and pale as death, he called out: "Monk, monk, nail Him to the cross again, do you hear?" And behind him sounded in hoarse hissing: "Yes, yes, crucify Him, crucify Him!" And then from every mouth in the church, threatening, pleading, rose as in a storm of cries: "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" And, clear and light, one trembling voice: "Crucify Him!"

But the monk looked down over the swarm of upraised pleading hands, over the distorted faces, over the dark openings of all these screaming mouths, and he stretched his arms in a moment of ecstasy up toward heaven and laughed!

Then he stepped down from the pulpit, and his people lifted their great banners and their bare black crosses, and went out of the church. Again they marched singing through the streets, and again they passed through the yawning gate in the tower.

And the people of Old Bergamo stared after them while they went down the mountain. Over the steep, wall-inclosed road was a haze from the sun going down, way out over the plain, and they were only half visible because of all that light, but on the red wall of the town stood out, black and sharp, the shadows of the great crosses that were swinging from one side to the other in the crowd.

Farther away sounded the song; red flared yet a banner or two from the fire-blackened ruins of the new town. Then they disappeared in the sunset light of the plain.

A Freethinker's "Rules of Life"

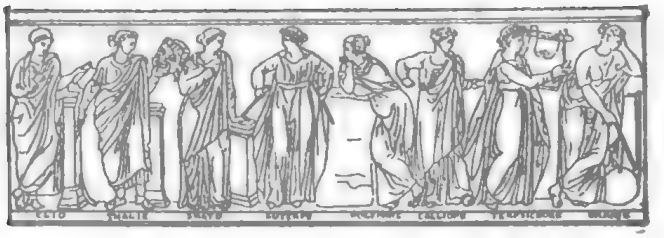
WHETHER it is right to say that one believes in God and Christianity without intending what one knows the hearer intends one to intend, depends on how much or how little the hearer can understand. Life is not an exact science, it is an art. Just as the contention, excellent so far as it goes, that each is to do what is right in his own eyes leads, when ridden to death, to anarchy and chaos, so the contention that everyone should be either self-effacing or truthful to the bitter end reduces life to an absurdity. If we seek real, rather than technical truth, it is more true to be considerately untruthful within limits than to be inconsiderately truthful without them. What the limits are we generally know but cannot say.

There is an unbridgeable chasm between thought and words that we must jump as best we can, and it is just here that the two hitch on to one another. The higher rules of life transcend the sphere of language; they cannot be gotten by speech, neither shall logic be weighed for the price thereof. They have their being in the fear of the Lord and in the departing from evil without even knowing in words what the Lord is, nor the fear of the Lord, nor yet evil.

Common straightforwardness and kindliness are the highest points that man or woman can reach, but they should no more be made matters of conversation than should the lowest vices. Extremes meet here as elsewhere, and the extremes of vice and virtue are alike common and unmentionable.

There is nothing for it but a very humble hope that from the Great Unknown Source our daily insight and daily strength may be given us with our daily bread. And what is this but Christianity, whether we believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead or not? So that Christianity is like a man's soul—he who finds may lose it and he who loses may find it.

If, then, a man may be a Christian while believing himself hostile to all that some consider most essential in Christianity, may he not also be a free-thinker (in the common use of the word) while believing himself hostile to free-thought? SAMUEL BUTLER.



The Tenth Muse: *Advertisa*

FOUR WORDS WORTH MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

In August, the Society of American Florists and Ornamental Horticulturists presented its annual gold medal to Major P. F. O'Keefe for his services to the industry in originating the slogan:

"SAY IT WITH FLOWERS"

The experts declare that this phrase was a large factor in the national growth of the flower business, which doubled between 1921 and 1924, and increased a fourth again the following year.

A BOOK ADVERTISEMENT 1900 YEARS AGO—BY THE AUTHOR

Here is he whom you read, he whom you ask for, Martial, known throughout the whole world for his witty little books of Epigrams. To him, studious reader, while he lives and feels, you have given the glory that poets win but rarely after they are dust.

You, who wish my poems should be everywhere with you, and look to have them as companions on a long journey, buy those which the parchment confines in small pages. Assign your book-boxes to the great; this copy of me one hand can grasp. And that you may not fail to know where I am for sale, or wander aimlessly all over the town, if you accept my guidance you will be sure. Seek out Secundus, the freedman of learned Lucensis, behind the entrance to the Temple of Peace and the Forum of Pallas. MARTIAL.

TO UNDERSTAND WOMEN—SEE THE UP-TO-DATE ADVERTISEMENTS

THE VELVET DEPTHS OF MELTING EYES

pique the interest and haunt the memory because of their shadowy fringe of sweeping lashes. Your eyes will reveal interesting depths and haunting tenderness, if you darken your lashes with ——. Just touch them lightly with the brush attached to the stopper of the bottle, and they at once appear much longer, darker and heavier. Your eyes have then the soulfulness of a screen star's. *Current Magazines.*

HOW LIFE IMITATES ADVERTISING ART

Why this talk always about American women? What about the men? There is a category of superior beings among them. You see them in advertisements brushing their teeth, fastening their ties or shoes, all complete athletes with faces like Adonises. You also see them in life.

Will all young Americans reach this standard of beauty? Perhaps, unless they are

millionaires. For them there is no hope. All the American millionaires I have seen are ugly. JEAN MABILAIS.

THE INTIMATE TOUCH

(*A Letter in Facsimile Handwriting*)

My dear Mrs. ——: New York City.

I've been wanting to write you a personal note for several days, but as usual the many demands have made me put it off.

The fact that the best people in New York visit me would alone be reason to invite your interest in what I am doing here. I feel, however, that I should especially write you that the method most of your friends use for eliminating unwanted hair with the roots is the —— method which I originated many years ago.

I wonder whether you've been having the same experience I've been having. Every time I go to the theatre the lady in front has a good-looking bob, spoiled by a neck with either a bristly growth or a dark shadow under the skin, which is gradually destroying the natural hairline.

I wish at times there were no conventions, for I know that if I could just tell this lady what —— would do in making her back of neck ivory-like, she would be grateful. But, instead, I just sit there and pity her.

Next time you are on the Avenue, why don't you draw up at —— —— street (private entrance just west of Fifth Avenue) and in a very few minutes time let me show you, without charge the extraordinary possibilities of this safe —— method.

Faithfully,

MADAME ——.

JUST WHAT DID THEY MEAN TO SAY?

HOUSEKEEPER WANTED—At once, under 40. Four gentlemen alone in country, one light in weight who wants an easy place; widow preferred. If not in want of situation don't answer. Address O X, care *NEWS*, Bangor, Me.
Bangor (Me.) Daily News.

WANTED—To hear of some good medium size farmer, who is easy to get along with, and prefer south of Piqua from west to east as far east as Conoyer, who would care to use one steady farm hand the whole year around for 1926, if interested write soon or come around, tell your kind of work and largest price you care to pay. Extra large farmer, dairyman or tight wad need not to write. Charles G. Trost, Sidney, Ohio, Route 5.
Piqua (Ohio) Daily Call.

NOTICE—Having installed city water I can easily increase my customers for milk a 100. See R. W. Hankins, Phone 463.
Alva (Okla.) Daily Courier-Review.

NOTICE—I want to let the people know I can not clean house no more. I have gotten more than I can do. It is killing me, so please don't ask me. When I am gone some body will say "Good old negro, but gone now." SAM ROBINSON.
Mineral Daily News (Keyser, W. Va.)

THE DEVIL has all kinds of agencies pointing the road to destruction. There is only one sure guide to the road. Come to the Presbyterian Sunday School and let us study it together.
Claremont (Minn.) News.

WANT—First Class Coon Dog. None other need reply. E. W. Cooler, Coosawhatchie, S. C.
South Carolina Market Bulletin.

FOR SALE—Unusual Naked Dog. Entirely hairless except head, end of tail, and tips of hands and legs. Beautifully spotted all over the body. 3 months old. Male. To be sold to dog-lover. Itchi Shokwai, Utsubo Kami-dori Itchome 7, Nishi-ku, Osaka. *Japan Times.*

LINWOOD, 2900—High class, completely furnished overstuffed apartment; piano; bus. Lin. 6520.
Kansas City (Kans.) Times.

CARD OF THANKS—Mrs. May Brenneman wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the Schenley Products Company and all the neighbors who worked so hard to save her home. She thanks them all most heartily and hopes they may need assistance under like circumstances.
Freeport (Pa.) Journal.

WANTED AT ONCE—About 500 people to give me some insurance to write, about half that many to buy farms, and a few people to make farm loans for and then I will be going good. When you feel that you can't get skinned anywhere else you just as well come and let me try it, If I don't do it complete and satisfactory, your money refunded. FRANK ANDREWS, Real Estate and Insurance.
Moorhead (Iowa) Register.

FOR SALE—Two door sedan; one-half cash, balance down. *Tampa (Fla.) Telegraph.*

Orso

By HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ

Translated by Vatslaf A. Hlasko and Thomas H. Bullick

THE last days of autumn in Anaheim, a town situated in Southern California, are days of joy and celebration. The grape-gathering is finished and the town is crowded with the vineyard hands. There is nothing more picturesque than the sight of these people, composed partly of a sprinkling of Mexicans, but mainly of Cahuilla Indians, who come from the wild mountains of San Bernardino to earn some money by gathering grapes. They scatter through the streets and market-places, called lolas, where they sleep in tents or under the roof of the sky, which is always clear at this time of the year. This beautiful city, surrounded with its growths of eucalyptus, olive, castor, and pepper trees, is filled with the noisy confusion of a fair, which strangely contrasts with the deep and solemn silence of the plains, covered with cacti, just beyond the vineyards. In the evening, when the sun hides his radiant head in the depths of the ocean, and upon the rosy sky are seen in its light the equally rosy-tinted wings of the wild geese, ducks, pelicans and cranes, descending by the thousands from the mountains to the ocean, then in the town the lights are lit and the evening amusements begin. The negro minstrels play on bones, and by the campfires can be heard the picking of the banjo; the Mexicans dance on an outspread poncha their favourite bolero; Indians join in the dance, holding in their teeth long white sticks of kiotte, or beating time with their hands, and exclaiming, "E viva"; the fires, fed with redwood, crackle as they blaze, sending up clouds of bright sparks, and by its reflection can be seen the dancing figures, and around them the local settlers with their comely wives and sisters watching the scene.

The day on which the juice from the last bunch of grapes is trampled out by the feet of the Indians is generally celebrated by the advent of Hirsch's Circus, from Los Angeles. The proprietor of the circus is a German, and besides the circus owns a menagerie composed of monkeys, jaguars, pumas, African lions, one elephant, and several parrots, childish with age—"*The greatest attraction of the world.*" The Cahuilla will give his last peso, if he has not spent it on drink, to see not only wild animals—for these abound in the San Bernardino Mountains—but to see the circus girls, athletes, clowns, and all its wonders, which seem to him as "a great medicine"—that is, magical feats, impossible of accomplishment except by the aid of supernatural powers.

Mr. Hirsch, the proprietor of the circus, would be very angry with any one who dared to say that his circus attracted only Mexicans, Indians, and Chinese. Certainly not; the arrival of the circus brings hither not only the people of the town and vicinity, but even those of the neighbouring towns of Westminster, Orange, and Los Nietos. Orange Street is crowded with buggies and wagons of divers shapes, so that it is difficult to get through. The whole world of settlers comes as one man. Young, bright girls, with their hair prettily banged over their eyes, sitting on the front seats, drive some of these vehicles, and gracefully upset passing pedestrians, chatter and show their white teeth; the Spanish señoritas from Los Nietos cover you with their warm, ardent glances from under their lace mantillas; the married women from the country, dressed in their latest and best fashions, lean with pride on the arms of the sunburned farmers, who are dressed in old hats, jean pants, and flannel shirts, fastened with hook and eye, and without neckties.

All these people meet and greet each other, and gossip, and the women inspect with critical eye the dresses of their neighbours, to see if they are "very fashionable."

Among the buggies are some covered with flowers, which look like huge bouquets; the young men, mounted on mustangs, bend from their high Mexican saddles and peer under the hats of the young girls; the half-wild horses, frightened by the noise and confusion, look here and there with their bloodshot eyes, curvet, rear, and try to unseat their riders, but the cool riders seem to pay no attention to them.

They all speak of "the greatest attraction," which was about to excel everything

that had been seen before. Truly, the flaming posters announced genuine wonders. The proprietor, Hirsch, that renowned "artist of the whip," will in the arena give a contest with a fierce, untamed African lion. The lion, according to the program, springs upon the proprietor, whose only defense is his whip. This simple weapon in his hands (according to the program) will change itself into a fiery sword and shield. The end of this whip will sting as a rattlesnake, flash as lightning, shoot as a thunderbolt, and keep at a proper distance the enraged monster, who vainly roars and tries to jump on the artist. This is not the end yet: sixteen-year-old Orso, an "American Hercules," born of a white father and Indian mother, will carry around six people, three on each shoulder; besides this, the management offers one hundred dollars to any man, regardless of colour, who can throw Orso in a wrestling match. A rumour arose in Anaheim that from the mountains of San Bernardino comes for this purpose the "Grizzly Killer," a hunter who was celebrated for his bravery and strength, and who, since California was settled, was the first man who attacked these great bears single-handed and armed only with a knife. It is the probable victory of the "Grizzly Killer" over the sixteen-year-old athlete of the circus that highly excites the minds of the males of Anaheim, because if Orso, who until now, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, had overthrown the strongest Americans, will be defeated, great glory will cover all California. The feminine minds are not less excited by the following number of the program: Orso will carry, on a pole thirty feet high, a small fairy, the "Wonder of the World," of which the poster says that she is the most beautiful girl that ever lived on this earth since the beginning of the "Christian Era." Though she is only thirteen years of age, the management also offers one hundred dollars to every maiden, "without regard to colour of skin," who will dare to compete and wrest the palm of beauty from this "Aerial Angel." The maidens of Anaheim, both great and small, make grimaces on reading this, and say that it would not be ladylike to enter such a contest. Nevertheless they gladly surrender the comfort of their rocking chairs rather than miss the show and the chance of seeing their childish rival, in whose beauty, in comparison with the sisters Bimpa, for instance, none of them believed. The two sisters Bimpa, the elder Refugio, and the younger Mercedes, sitting gracefully in a handsome buggy, are now reading the posters; their faces show no trace of emotion, though they feel that the eyes of Anaheim are on them, as if supplicating them to save the honour of the whole county, and with a patriotic pride, founded upon the conviction that there is none more beautiful than these two California flowers in all the mountains and cañons of the whole world. Oh, beautiful indeed are the sisters Refugio and Mercedes! Not in vain does the pure Castilian blood flow in their veins, to which their mother constantly refers, showing her disdain for all coloured races, as well as for the Americans.

The figures of the sisters are slender, subtle, and full of mysterious grace, quiet, and so luxurious that they greatly impress all young men who come near them. From Donnas Refugio and Mercedes exhales a charm as the fragrance from the magnolia and the lily. Their faces are delicate, complexions transparent with a slight rosy tint, as if illumined with the dawn; the eyes dark and dreamy, sweet, innocent, and tender in their glances. Wrapped in muslin rebosos, they sit in their buggy adorned with flowers, pure and innocent, unconscious of their own beauty. Anaheim looked upon them, devoured them with its eyes, was proud of them, and loved them. Who then is this "Jenny," that can win victory over these? "Truly," the *Saturday Review* wrote, "when little Jenny had climbed to the top of the mast, resting on the powerful shoulders of Orso, and from this eminence, suspended above the earth, in danger of death, she outstretched her arms and poised like a butterfly, the circus became silent and all eyes and hearts followed with trembling the movements of this wonderful child. He who saw her on the mast or on a horse," concluded the *Saturday Review*, "will never forget her, because the greatest painter in the world, even Mr. Harvey, of San Francisco, who decorated the Palace Hotel, could paint nothing equal to it."

The youths of Anaheim who were enamoured by the Misses Bimpa were skeptical of this, and affirmed that it was a "humbug," but this question will be settled in the evening. Meanwhile, the commotion around the circus is increasing each moment. From among the low wooden buildings surrounding the canvas circus there comes the roar of the lions and elephant; the parrots, fastened to rings hanging to the huts, fill the air with their cries and whistles; the monkeys swing suspended by their tails or mock the public, who are kept

at a distance by a rope fence. At last, from the main enclosure the procession emerges for the purpose of whetting and astonishing the curiosity of the public to a greater extent. The procession is headed by a gaudy band-wagon, drawn by six prancing horses with fine harness, and feathers on their heads. The riders on the saddles are in the costume of French postilions. On the other wagons come cages of lions, and in every cage is seated a lady with an olive branch in her hand. Then follows an elephant, covered with a carpet, and a tower on its back, which contains several men arrayed as East Indian hunters. The band is playing, the drums are beating, the lions are roaring, the whips are cracking; in a word, this cavalcade moves forward with great noise and uproar. But this is not all: behind the elephant there follows a machine on wheels, with a locomotive pipe, somewhat resembling an organ, which, blown by steam, emits the most discordant yells and whistles intended for the national "Yankee Doodle." The Americans cry "Hurray!" the Germans, "Hoch!" the Mexicans, "E viva!" and the Cahuillas howl for joy.

The crowds follow the procession, the place around the circus becomes deserted, the parrots cease their chatter, and the monkeys their gymnastics. But "the greatest attractions" do not take part in the procession. The "incomparable artist of the whip," the manager, the "unconquerable Orso," and the "Aerial Angel, Jenny," are all absent. All this is preserved for the evening so as to attract the crowds.

The manager is somewhere in one of the wooden buildings, or looks into the ticket-seller's van, where he pretends to be angry. Orso and Jenny are in the ring practicing some of their feats. Under its canvas roof reigns dust and silence. In the distance, where the seats are arranged, it is totally dark; the greatest part of the light falls through the roof on the ring, with its sand and sawdust covering. With the help of the gray light which filters through the canvas can be seen a horse standing near the parapet. The big horse feels very lonely, whisks the flies with his tail, and often sways his head. Gradually the eye, becoming accustomed to the dim light, discerns other objects—for instance: the mast upon which Orso carries Jenny, the hoops pasted with paper for her to jump through. All these lie on the ground without order, and the half-lighted arena and nearly dark benches give an impression of a deserted building with battened windows. The terrace of seats, only here and there broken with a stray glimmer of light, look like ruins. The horse, standing with drooping head, does not enliven the picture.

Where are Orso and Jenny? One of the rays of light that stream through an aperture of the canvas, in which floats the golden dust, falls on a row of distant seats. This body of light, undulating with the swaying canvas, at last falls upon a group composed of Orso and Jenny.

Orso sits on top of the bench, and near to him is Jenny. Her beautiful childish face leans against the arm of the athlete and her hand rests on his neck. The eyes of the girl are lifted upward, as if listening intently to the words of her companion, who bends over her, moving his head at times, apparently explaining something.

Leaning as they are against each other, you might take them for a pair of lovers, but for the fact that the girl's uplifted eyes express strong attention and intense thought rather than any romantic feeling, and that her legs, which are covered with pink fleshings, and her feet in slippers, sway to and fro with a childish abandon. Her figure has just begun to blossom into maidenhood. In everything Jenny is still a child, but so charming and beautiful that, without reflecting upon the ability of Mr. Harvey, who decorated the Palace Hotel, of San Francisco, it would be difficult even for him to imagine anything to equal her. Her delicate face is simply angelic; her large, sad blue eyes have a deep, sweet and confiding expression; her dark eyebrows are penciled with unequaled purity on her forehead, white and reposeful as if in deep thought, and the bright, silky hair, somewhat tossed, throws a shadow on it, of which, not only Master Harvey, but a certain other painter, named Rembrandt, would not have been ashamed. The girl at once reminds you of Cinderella and Gretchen, and the leaning posture which she now maintains suggests timidity and the need of protection.

Her posture, which strongly reminds you of those of Greuze, contrasts strangely with her circus attire, composed of a short, white muslin skirt, embroidered with small silver stars, and pink tights. Sitting in a golden beam of light with the dark, deep background, she looks like some sunny and transparent vision, and her slender form contrasts with the square and sturdy figure of the youth.

Orso, who is dressed in pink tights,

appears from afar as if he were naked, and the same ray of light distinctly reveals his immense shoulders, rounded chest, small waist, and legs too short in proportion to the trunk.

His powerful form seems as if it were hewn out with an ax. He has all the features of a circus athlete, but so magnified that they make him noticeable; besides, his face is not handsome. Sometimes, when he raises his head, you can see his face, the lines of which are regular, perhaps too regular, and somewhat rigid, as if carved from marble. The low forehead, with the hair falling on it, like the mane of a horse, straight and black, inherited from his squaw mother, gives to his face a gloomy and threatening expression. He has a similarity to both the bull and the bear, and he personifies a terrible and somewhat evil force. He is not of a good disposition.

When Jenny passes by the horses, those gentle creatures turn their heads and look at her with intelligent eyes, and neigh and whinny, as if wishing to say: "How do you do, darling?" while at the sight of Orso they shudder with fear. He is a reticent and gloomy youth. Mr. Hirsch's negroes, who are his hostlers, clowns, minstrels, and rope walkers, do not like Orso. They tease him as much as they dare, and because he is half-Indian they think nothing of him, and plague and mock him. Truly, the manager, who offers the hundred dollars to any one who can defeat him, does not risk much; he dislikes and fears him, as the tamer of the wild animals fears a lion, and whips him on the slightest provocation.

Mr. Hirsch feels that, if he does not keep the youth in subjection by constantly beating him, he will be beaten himself, and he follows the principle of the Creole woman, who considered beating a punishment, and no beating a reward.

Such was Orso. Recently he began to be less sullen, because little Jenny had a good influence over him. It happened about a year ago that when Orso, who was then the attendant of the wild animals, was cleaning the cage of the puma, the beast put its paws through the bars of the cage and wounded his head severely. Then he entered the cage, and after a terrible fight between them, he alone remained alive. But he was so badly hurt that he fainted from loss of blood. He was ill a long time, which was greatly aggravated by a severe whipping which the manager gave him for breaking the spine of the puma.

When he was ill Jenny took great care of him, and dressed his wounds, and when she had leisure, read the Bible to him. That is a "good book" which speaks of love, of forgiveness, of mercy—in a word, of things that are never mentioned in Mr. Hirsch's circus. Orso, listening to this book, pondered long in his Indian head, and at last came to the conclusion that if it would be as good in the circus as in this book, perhaps he would not be so bad. He thought also that then he would not be beaten so often, and some one would be found who would love him. But who? Not negroes and not Mr. Hirsch; little Jenny, whose voice sounded as sweetly in his ears as the voice of the mavis, might be the one.

One evening, under the influence of this thought, he began to weep and kiss the small hands of Jenny, and from this time on he loved her very much. During the performance in the evening, when Jenny was riding a horse, he was always in the ring and carefully watching over her to prevent any accident. When he held the paper hoops for her to jump through he smiled on her; when to the sound of the music he balanced her on the top of the high mast, and the audience was hushed with fright, he felt uneasy himself. He knew very well if she should fall that no one from the "good book" would be left in the circus; he never removed his eyes from her, and the evident caution and anxiety expressed in his movements added to the terror of the people. Then, when recalled into the ring by the storm of applause, they would run in together, he would push her forward, as if deserving of all the praise, and murmur from joy. This reticent youth spoke only to Jenny, and to her alone he opened his mind. He hated the circus and Mr. Hirsch, who was entirely different from the people in the "good book." Something always attracted him to the edge of the horizon, to the woods and plains. When the circus troupe in their constant wanderings chanced to pass through wild, lonely spots, he heard voices awakening the instincts of a captive wolf, who sees the woods and plains for the first time. This propensity he inherited not only from his mother, but also from his father, who had been a frontiersman. He shared all his hopes with Jenny, and often narrated to her how fully and untrammeled live the people of the plains. Most of this he guessed or gleaned from the hunters of the prairies, who came to the circus with

wild animals which they had captured for the menagerie, or to try their prowess for the hundred-dollar prize.

Little Jenny listened to these Indian visions, opening widely her blue eyes and falling into deep reveries. For Orso never spoke of going alone to the desert; she was always with him, and it was very good for them there. Every day they saw something new; they possessed all they needed, and it seemed right to make all their plans carefully.

So now they sit in this beam of light, talking to each other, instead of practicing and attempting new feats. The horse stands in the ring and feels lonely. Jenny leans on Orso's arm, thoughtfully contemplating and looking with wistful, wondering eyes into the dim space, swinging her feet like a child and musing—how it will be on the plains, and asking questions of Orso.

"How do they live there?" says she, raising her eyes to the face of her friend.

"There are plenty of oaks. They take an ax and build a house."

"Well," says Jenny, "but until the house is built?"

"It is always warm there. The 'Grizzly Killer' says it is very warm."

Jenny begins to swing her feet more energetically, as if the warmth there has settled the question in her mind; but shortly she remembers that she has in the circus a dog and a cat, and that she would like to take them with her. She calls her dog Mister Dog and her cat Mister Cat.

"And will Mr. Dog and Mr. Cat go with us?'

"They will," answers Orso, looking pleased.

"Will we take with us the 'good book'?"

"We will," says Orso, still more pleased.

"Well," says the girl in her innocence, "Mr. Cat will catch birds for us; Mr. Dog will drive away bad people with his bark; you will be my husband and I will be your wife, and they will be our children."

Orso feels so happy that he cannot speak, and Jenny continues:

"There there will be no Mr. Hirsch, no circus, we will not work, and basta! But no!" she adds a moment later, "the 'good book' says that we should work, and I sometimes will jump through one—through the two hoops, the three, the four hoops."

Jenny evidently does not imagine work under any other form tham jumping through hoops.

Shortly she says again:

"Orso, will I indeed be always with you?"

"Yes, Jen, for I love you very much."

His face brightens as he says so, and becomes almost beautiful.

And yet he does not know himself how dear to him has become this small bright head.

He has nothing else in this world but her, and he watches her as the faithful dog guards his mistress. By her fragile side he looks like Hercules, but he is unconscious of this.

"Jen," says he after a moment, "listen to what I tell you."

Jenny, who shortly before had got up to look at the horse, now turns and, kneeling down before Orso, puts her two elbows on his knees, crosses her arms and, resting her chin on her wrists, uplifts her face and is all attention.

At this moment, to the consternation of the children, the "artist of the whip" enters the ring in a very bad humour, because his trial with a lion had entirely failed.

This lion, who was bald from old age, desired only to be let alone, had no inclination to attack the "artist," and hid himself from the lash of the whip in a far corner of the cage. The manager thought with despair that if this loyal disposition remained with the lion until the evening the contest with the whip would be a failure; for to fight a lion who slinks away needs no more art than to eat a lobster from his tail. The bad temper of the proprietor became still worse when he learned from the ticket seller that he was disposing of no seats in the "gods"; that the Cahuillas evidently had spent for drinks, all the money that they had earned in the vineyards and that they came to his window and offered their blankets, marked "U. S.," or their wives, especially the old ones, in exchange for tickets of admission. The lack of money among the Cahuillas was no small loss for the "artist of the whip," for he counted on a "crowded house," and if the seats in the "gods" were not sold no "crowded house" was obtainable; therefore the manager wished at this moment that all the Indians had but one back, and that he might give an exhibition of his skill with the whip on that one back, in the presence of all Anaheim. Thus he felt as he entered the ring, and seeing the horse standing idle under the parapet, he felt like jumping with anger. Where are Orso and Jenny? Shading his eyes with his hand he looked all around the circus, and observed in a bright beam, Orso and Jenny

kneeling before him with her elbows resting on his knees. At this sight he let the lash of his whip trail on the ground.

"Orso!"

If lightning had struck in the midst of the children they could not have been more startled. Orso jumped to his feet and descended in the passageway between the benches with the hasty movement of an animal who comes to his master at his call; behind him followed Jenny with eyes wide open from fright, clutching the benches as she passed them.

Orso, on entering the ring, stopped by the parapet, gloomy and silent, the gray light from above bringing into relief his Herculean trunk upon its short legs.

"Nearer," cried out the manager in a hoarse voice; meanwhile the lash of his long whip moved upon the sand with a threatening motion, like the tail of a tiger watching his approaching prey.

Orso advanced several steps, and for a few minutes they looked into each other's eyes. The manager's face resembled that of the tamer who enters the cage, intending to subdue a dangerous animal, and at the same time watches it.

His rage overcame his caution. His legs, incased in elk riding breeches and high boots, pranced under him with anger. Perhaps it was not the idleness alone of the children which increased his rage. Jenny, from above, looked at both of them like a frightened hare watching two lynxes.

"Hoodlum! dog catcher! cur!" cried the manager.

The whip, with the velocity of lightning, whistled through the air in a circle, hissed and struck. Orso winced and howled a little, and stepped toward the manager, but the second stroke stopped him at once, then the third, fourth—tenth. The contest had begun, although there was no audience. The uplifted hand of the "great artist" scarcely moved, but his wrist revolved, as if a part of some machinery, and, with each revolution, the sharp point of the lash stung the skin of Orso. It seemed as if the whip, or rather its poisonous fang, filled the whole space between the athlete and the manager, who in his increasing excitement reached the genuine enthusiasm of the artist. The "master" simply improvised. The cracking end flashing in the air had twice written down its bloody trace on the bare neck of the athlete. Orso was silent in this dance. At every cut he stepped one step forward and the manager one step backward. In this way they circled the arena, and at last the manager backed out of the ring as a conqueror from the cage, and disappeared through the entrance to the stables, still as the conqueror. As he left his eye fell on Jenny.

"Get on your horse," he cried; "I will settle with you later."

His voice had scarcely ceased before her white skirt flashed in the air, and in a moment she was on the back of the horse. The manager had disappeared, and the horse began to gallop around the ring, occasionally striking the side with its hoofs.

"Hep! hep!" agitatedly said Jenny to the horse, with her childish voice: "Hep! hep!" but this "hep, hep" was at the same time a sob. The horse increased his speed, clattering with his hoofs as he leaned more and more to the center. The girl, standing on the pad with her feet close together, seemed scarcely to touch it with the ends of her toes; her bare, rosy arms rose and fell as she maintained her balance; her hair and light muslin dress floated behind her supple figure, which looked like a bird circling in the air.

"Hep! hep!" she kept exclaiming. Meanwhile her eyes were filled with tears, and to see she had to raise her head; the movement of the horse made her dizzy; the terrace of seats and the ring seemed to revolve around her; she wavered once, twice, and then fell down into the arms of Orso.

"Oh! Orso, poor Orso!" cried the child.

"What's the matter, Jen? why do you cry? I don't feel the pain, I don't feel it."

Jenny threw both her arms around his neck and began to kiss his cheeks. Her whole body trembled, and she sobbed convulsively.

"Orso, oh, Orso," she sobbed, for she could not speak, and her arms clung closer to his neck. She could not have cried more if she had been beaten herself. So, in the end, he began to pet and console her. Forgetting his own pain he took her in his arms and pressed her to his heart, and his nerves being excited by the beating, he now felt for the first time that he loved her more than the dog loved his mistress. He breathed heavily, and his lips panted out the words:

"I feel no pain. When you are with me, I am happy, Jenny, Jenny!"

When this was transpiring the manager was walking in the stables, foaming with rage. His heart was filled with jealousy. He saw the girl on her knees before Orso; recently this beautiful child had awakened instincts in him, vaguely animal, but as yet

undeveloped, and now he fancied that she and Orso loved each other, and he felt revengeful, and had a wild desire to punish her—to whip her soundly. This desire he could not resist. Shortly he called to her.

She at once left Orso, and in a moment had disappeared in the dark entrance to the stables. Orso stood stupefied, and instead of following her he walked with unsteady steps to a bench, and, seating himself, began to breathe heavily.

When the girl entered the stables she could see nothing, as it was much darker there than in the ring. Yet, fearing that she would be suspected of having delayed her coming, she cried out in a faint voice:

"I am here, master, I am here."

At the same moment the hand of the manager caught hers, and he hoarsely said:

"Come!"

If he had shown anger or badly scolded her she would have felt less frightened than at this silence with which he led her to the circus wardrobe. She hung back, resisting him, and repeating quickly:

"Oh, dear Mr. Hirsch, forgive me! forgive me!"

But forcibly he dragged her to the long room where they stored their costumes, and turned the key in the door.

Jenny fell down on her knees. With uplifted eyes and folded hands, trembling as a leaf, the tears streaming down her cheeks, she tried to arouse his mercy; in answer to her supplications, he took from the wall a wire whip, and said:

"Lie down."

With despair she flung herself at his feet, nearly dying from fright. Every nerve of her body quivered; but vainly she pressed her pallid lips to his polished boots. Her alarm and pleading seemed to arouse the demon in him more than ever. Grasping her roughly, he threw her violently on a heap of dresses, and in an instant, after trying to stop the kicking of her feet, he began beating her cruelly.

"Orso! Orso!" she shouted.

About this moment the door shook on its hinges, rattled, creaked and gave way, and half of it, pushed in with a tremendous force, fell with a crash upon the ground.

In this opening stood Orso.

The wire whip fell from the hand of the manager, and his face became deadly pale, because Orso looked ferocious. His eyes were bloodshot, his lips covered with foam, his head inclined to one side like a bull's, and his whole body was crouched and gathered, as if ready to spring.

"Get out!" cried the manager, trying to hide his fear behind a show of authority.

The pent-up dam was already broken. Orso, who was usually as obedient to every motion as a dog, this time did not move, but leaning his head still more to one side, he moved slowly and threateningly toward the "artist of the whip," his iron muscles taut as whipcords.

"Help! help!" cried the manager.

They heard him.

Four brawny negroes from the stables ran in through the broken door and fell upon Orso. A terrible fight ensued, upon which the manager looked with chattering teeth. For a long time you could see nothing but a tangled mass of dark bodies wrestling with convulsive movements, rolling on the ground in a writhing heap; in the silence which followed sometimes was heard a groan, a snort, loud, short breathing, the gritting of teeth.

In a moment one of the negroes, as if by a superhuman force, was sent from this formless mass, whirling headlong through the air, and fell at the feet of the manager, striking his skull with great force on the ground; soon a second flew out; then from the center of this turbulent group Orso's body alone arose, covered with blood and looking more terrible than before. His knees were still pressing heavily on the breasts of the two fainting negroes. He arose to his feet and moved toward the manager.

Hirsch closed his eyes.

The next moment he felt that his feet had left the ground, that he was flying through the air—then he felt nothing; his whole body was dashed with monstrous force into the remaining half of the door, and he fell to the earth unconscious.

Orso wiped his face, and, coming over to Jenny, said:

"Let us go."

He took her by the hand and they went.

The whole town was following the circus procession and the steam calliope, playing "Yankee Doodle," and the place around the circus was deserted. The parrots only, swinging in their hoops, filled the air with their cries. Hand in hand, Orso and Jenny went forward; from the end of the street could be seen the immense plains, covered with cacti. Silently they passed by the houses, shaded by the eucalyptus trees; then they passed the slaughter-houses, around which had gathered thousands of small black birds with red-tipped wings. They jumped over the large irri-

gation ditches, entered into an orange grove, and on emerging from it found themselves among the cacti.

This was the desert.

As far as the eye could reach these prickly plants rose higher and higher; thick leaves growing from other leaves obstructed the path, sometimes catching on Jenny's dress. In places they grew to such a great height that the children seemed to be as much lost here as if they were in the woods, and no one could find them there. So they kept threading their way through them, now to the right and then to the left, but careful always to go from the town. Sometimes between the cacti they could see on the horizon the blue mountains of Santa Ana. They went to the mountains. The heat was great. Gray-coloured locusts chirped in the cacti; the sun's rays poured down upon the earth in streams; the dried-up earth was covered with a network of cracks; the stiff leaves of the cacti seemed to soften from the heat, and the flowers were languid and half-wilted. The children proceeded, silent and thoughtful. But all that surrounded them was so new that they surrendered themselves to their impressions, and for the moment forgot even their weariness. Jenny's eyes ran from one bunch of cacti to another; again she looked to the farther clusters, saying to her friend:

"Is this the wilderness, Orso?"

But the desert did not appear to be deserted. From the farther clumps came the calling of the male quail, and around sounded the different murmurs of clucking, of twittering, of the ruffling of feathers: in a word, the divers voices of the small inhabitants of the plains. Sometimes there flew up a whole covey of quail; the gaudy-topped pheasants scattered on their approach; the black squirrels dived into their holes; the rabbits disappeared in all directions; the gophers were sitting on their hind legs beside their holes, looking like fat German farmers standing in their doorway.

After resting an hour the children proceeded on their journey. Jenny soon felt thirsty. Orso, in whom had awakened his Indian inventive faculties, began to pluck cactus fruits. They were in abundance, and grew together with the flowers on the same leaves. In plucking them they pricked their fingers with the sharp points, but the fruit was luscious. Their sweet and acid flavour quenched at once their thirst and appeased their hunger. The prairies fed the children as a mother; thus strengthened they could proceed further. The cacti arose higher, and you could say that they grew on the head of one another. The ground on which they walked ascended gradually and continuously. Looking backward once more they saw Anaheim, dissolving in the distance and looking like a grove of trees upon the low plains. Not a trace of the circus could be distinguished. They still pressed steadily onward to the mountains, which now became more distinct in the distance. The surroundings assumed another phase. Between the cacti appeared different bushes and even trees; the wooded portion of the foothills of Santa Ana had commenced. Orso broke one of the saplings, and, clearing off its branches, made a cudgel of it, which, in his hands, would prove a terrible weapon. His Indian instincts whispered to him that in the mountains it was better to be provided, even with a stick, than to go unarmed, especially now that the sun had lowered itself into the west. Its great fiery shield had rolled down far beyond Anaheim, into the blue ocean. After a while it disappeared, and in the west there gleamed red, golden, and orange lights, similar to ribbons and gauzy veils, stretched over the whole sky. The mountains uplifted themselves in this glow; the cacti assumed different fantastical shapes, resembling people and animals. Jenny felt tired and sleepy, but they still hastened to the mountains, although they knew not why. Soon they saw rocks, and on reaching them they discovered a stream; they drank some water and continued along its course. The rocks, which were at first broken and scattered, then changed into a solid wall, which became higher and higher, and soon they entered into a cañon.

The rosy lights died away; deeper and deeper dusk enveloped the earth. In places immense vines reached from one side of the cañon to the other, covering it like a roof, and making it dark and uncanny. On the mountain side, above them, could be heard the voices of the swaying and creaking forest trees. Orso supposed that now they were in the depths of the wilderness, where certainly there were many wild animals. From time to time his ear detected suspicious sounds, and when night fell he distinctly heard the hoarse mewing of the lynxes, the roar of the pumas, and the melancholy howling of the coyotes.

"Are you afraid, Jen?" asked Orso.

"No," replied the girl.

But she was already very tired, and could proceed no farther, so Orso took her in his arms and carried her. He went forward

with the hope that he would reach the house of some squatter, or should meet some Mexican campers. Once or twice it seemed to him that he saw the gleam of some wild animal's eyes. Then with one hand he pressed Jenny, who had now fallen asleep, to his breast, and with the other he grasped his stick. He was very tired himself; notwithstanding his great strength Jenny began to prove heavy for him, especially as he carried her on his left arm; the right one he wished to have free for defense. Occasionally he stopped to regain his breath and then continued on. Suddenly he paused and listened intently. It seemed to him as if he heard the echoes of the small bells which the settlers tie for the night to the neck of their cows and goats. Rushing forward, he soon reached a bend in the stream. The sound of the bells became more distinct, and joined with them in the distance was heard the barking of a dog. Then Orso was sure that he was nearing some settlement. It was high time that he did, for he was exhausted by the events of the day, and his strength had begun to fail him. On turning another bend he saw a light; as he moved forward his quick eyes discerned a campfire, a dog, evidently tied to a stump, tearing and barking, and at last the figure of a man seated by the fire.

"God send that this may be a man from the 'good book'!" thought he.

Then he resolved to awaken Jenny.

"Jen!" called he, "wake up, we shall eat."

"What is it?" asked the girl; "where are we?"

"In the wilderness."

She was now wide awake.

"What light is that?"

"A man lives there; we shall eat."

Poor Orso was very hungry.

Meanwhile they were nearing the fire. The dog barked more violently, and the old man, sitting by the fire, shaded his eyes and peered into the gloom. Shortly he said:

"Who is there?"

"It is us," answered Jenny in her delicate voice, "and we are very hungry."

"Come nearer," said the old man.

Emerging from behind a great rock, which had partly concealed them, they both stood in the light of the fire, holding each other's hands. The old man looked at them with astonishment, and involuntarily exclaimed:

"What is that?"

For he saw a sight which, in the sparsely populated mountains of Santa Ana, would astonish any one. Orso and Jenny were dressed in their circus attire. The beautiful girl, clothed in pink tights and short white skirt, appearing so suddenly before him, looked in the firelight like some fairy sylph. Behind her stood the youth with his powerful figure, covered also with pink fleshings, through which you could see his muscles standing out like knots on the oak.

The old squatter gazed at them with wide-open eyes.

"Who are you?" he inquired.

The girl, relying more on her own eloquence than on that of Orso, began to speak.

"We are from the circus, kind sir! Mr. Hirsch beat Orso very much and then wanted to beat me, but Orso did not let him, and fought Mr. Hirsch and four negroes, and then we ran off on the plains, and went a long distance through the cacti, and Orso carried me; then we came here, and we are very hungry."

The face of the old man softened and brightened as he listened to her story, and he looked with a fatherly interest on this charming child, who spoke with great haste, as if she wished to tell all in one breath.

"What is your name, little one?" he asked.

"Jenny."

"Welcome, Jenny! and you, Orso! People rarely come here. Come to me, Jenny."

Without hesitation the little girl put her arms around the neck of the old man and kissed him warmly. He appeared to her to be some one from the "good book."

"Will Mr. Hirsch find us here?" she said, as she took her lips from his face.

"If he comes he will find a bullet here," replied the old man; then added, "you said that you wanted to eat?"

"Oh, yes, very much."

The squatter, raking in the ashes of the fire, took out a fine leg of venison, the pleasant odour of which filled the air. Then they sat down to eat.

The night was gorgeous; the moon came out high in the heavens above the cañon; in the thicket the mavis began to sing sweetly; the fire burned brightly, and Orso was so filled with joy that he chanted with gladness. Both he and the girl ate heartily. The old man had no appetite; he looked upon little Jenny, and, for some unknown cause, his eyes were filled with tears.

Perhaps he had been once a father, or, perhaps, he so rarely saw people in these deserted mountains.

. . . . . .

Since then these three have lived together.

The Honour of the Name

By ÉMILE GABORIAU

Being a Sequel to "Monsieur Lecoq"

(Conclusion)

CHAPTER LII

HALF reclining upon a sofa, Mme. Blanche was listening to a new book which Aunt Medea was reading aloud, and she did not even raise her head as the servant delivered his message.

"A man?" she asked, carelessly; "what man?"

She was expecting no one; it must be one of the labourers employed by Martial.

"I cannot inform Madame," replied the servant. "He is quite a young man; is dressed like a peasant, and is perhaps seeking a place."

"It is probably the marquis whom he desires to see."

"Madame will excuse me, but he said particularly that he desired to speak to her."

"Ask his name and his business, then. Go on, aunt," she added; "we have been interrupted in the most interesting portion."

But Aunt Medea had not time to finish the page when the servant reappeared.

"The man says Madame will understand his business when she hears his name."

"And his name?"

"Chupin."

It was as if a bomb-shell had exploded in the room.

Aunt Medea, with a shriek, dropped her book, and sank back, half fainting, in her chair.

Blanche sprang up with a face as colourless as her white cashmere *peignoir*, her eyes troubled, her lips trembling.

"Chupin!" she repeated, as if she hoped the servant would tell her she had not understood him correctly; "Chupin!"

Then angrily:

"Tell this man that I will not see him; I will not see him, do you hear?"

But before the servant had time to bow respectfully and retire, the young marquise changed her mind.

"One moment," said she; "on reflection, I think I will see him. Bring him up."

The servant withdrew, and the two ladies looked at each other in silent consternation.

"It must be one of Chupin's sons," faltered Blanche, at last.

"Undoubtedly; but what does he desire?"

"Money, probably."

Aunt Medea lifted her eyes to heaven.

"God grant that he knows nothing of your meetings with his father! Blessed Jesus! what if he should know!"

"You are not going to despair in advance! We shall know all in a few moments. Pray be calm. Turn your back to us; look out into the street; do not let him see your face. But why is he so long in coming?"

Blanche was not deceived. It was Chupin's eldest son; the one to whom the dying poacher had confided his secret.

Since his arrival in Paris he had been running the streets from morning until evening, inquiring everywhere and of everybody the address of the Marquis de Sairmeuse. At last he discovered it; and he lost no time in presenting himself at the Hôtel Meurice.

He was now awaiting the result of his application at the entrance of the hotel, where he stood whistling, with his hands in his pockets, when the servant returned, saying:

"She consents to see you; follow me."

Chupin obeyed; but the servant, greatly astonished, and on fire with curiosity, loitered by the way in the hope of obtaining some explanation from this country youth.

"I do not say it to flatter you, my boy," he remarked, "but your name produced a great effect upon madame."

The prudent peasant carefully concealed the joy he felt on receiving this information.

"How does it happen that she knows you?" pursued the servant. "Are you both from the same place?"

"I am her foster-brother."

The servant did not believe a word of this response; but they had reached the apartment of the marquise, he opened the door and ushered Chupin into the room.

The peasant had prepared a little story in advance, but he was so dazzled by the magnificence around him that he stood motionless with staring eyes and gaping mouth. His wonder was increased by a large mirror opposite the door, in which he could survey himself from head to foot, and by the beautiful flowers on the carpet, which he feared to crush beneath his heavy shoes.

After a moment, Mme. Blanche decided to break the silence.

"What do you wish?" she demanded.

With many circumlocutions Chupin explained that he had been obliged to leave Sairmeuse on account of the numerous enemies he had there, that he had been unable to find his father's hidden treasure, and that he was consequently without resources.

"Enough!" interrupted Mme. Blanche. Then in a manner not in the least friendly, she continued: "I do not understand why you should apply to me. You and all the rest of your family have anything but an enviable reputation in Sairmeuse; still, as you are from that part of the country, I am willing to aid you a little on condition that you do not apply to me again."

Chupin listened to this homily with a half-cringing, half-impudent air; when it was finished he lifted his head, and said, proudly:

"I do not ask for alms."

"What do you ask then?"

"My dues."

The heart of Mme. Blanche sank, and yet she had courage to cast a glance of disdain upon the speaker, and said:

"Ah! do I owe you anything?"

"You owe me nothing personally, Madame; but you owe a heavy debt to my deceased father. In whose service did he perish? Poor old man! he loved you devotedly. His last words were of you. 'A terrible thing has just happened at the Borderie, my boy,' said he. 'The young marquise hated Marie-Anne, and she has poisoned her. Had it not been for me she would have been lost. I am about to die; let the whole blame rest upon me; it will not hurt me, and it will save the young lady. And afterward she will reward you; and as long as you keep the secret you will want for nothing.'"

Great as was his impudence, he paused, amazed by the perfectly composed face of the listener.

In the presence of such wonderful dissimulation he almost doubted the truth of his father's story.

The courage and heroism displayed by the marquise were really wonderful. She felt if she yielded once, she would forever be at the mercy of this wretch, as she was already at the mercy of Aunt Medea.

"In other words," said she, calmly, "you accuse me of the murder of Mademoiselle Lacheneur; and you threaten to denounce me if I do not yield to your demands."

Chupin nodded his head in acquiescence.

"Very well!" said the marquise; "since this is the case—go!"

It seemed, indeed, as if she would, by her audacity, win this dangerous game upon which her future peace depended. Chupin, greatly abashed, was standing there undecided what course to pursue when Aunt Medea, who was listening by the window, turned in affright, crying:

"Blanche! your husband—Martial! He is coming!"

The game was lost. Blanche saw her husband entering, finding Chupin, conversing with him, and discovering all!

Her brain whirled; she yielded.

She hastily thrust her purse in Chupin's hand and dragged him through an inner door and to the servants' staircase.

"Take this," she said, in a hoarse whisper. "I will see you again. And not a word—not a word to my husband, remember!"

She had been wise to yield in time. When she re-entered the *salon*, she found Martial there.

His head was bowed upon his breast; he held an open letter in his hand.

He looked up when his wife entered the room, and she saw a tear in his eye.

"What has happened?" she faltered.

Martial did not remark her emotion.

"My father is dead, Blanche," he replied.

"The Duc de Sairmeuse! My God! how did it happen?"

"He was thrown from his horse, in the forest, near the Sanguille rocks."

"Ah! it was there where my poor father was nearly murdered."

"Yes, it is the very place."

There was a moment's silence.

Martial's affection for his father had not been very deep, and he was well aware that his father had but little love for him. He was astonished at the bitter grief he felt on hearing of his death.

"From this letter which was forwarded

by a messenger from Sairmeuse," he continued, "I judge that everybody believes it to have been an accident; but I—I——"

"Well?"

"I believe he was murdered."

An exclamation of horror escaped Aunt Medea, and Blanche turned pale.

"Murdered!" she whispered.

"Yes, Blanche; and I could name the murderer. Oh! I am not deceived. The murderer of my father is the same man who attempted to assassinate the Marquis de Courtornieu——"

"Jean Lacheneur!"

Martial gravely bowed his head. It was his only reply.

"And you will not denounce him? You will not demand justice?"

Martial's face grew more and more gloomy.

"What good would it do?" he replied. "I have no material proofs to give, and justice demands incontestable evidence."

Then, as if communing with his own thoughts, rather than addressing his wife, he said, despondently:

"The Duc de Sairmeuse and the Marquis de Courtornieu have reaped what they have sown. The blood of murdered innocence always calls for vengeance. Sooner or later, the guilty must expiate their crimes."

Blanche shuddered. Each word found an echo in her own soul. Had he intended his words for her, he would not have expressed himself differently.

"Martial," said she, trying to arouse him from his gloomy revery, "Martial."

He did not seem to hear her, and, in the same tone, he continued:

"These Lacheneurs were happy and honoured before our arrival at Sairmeuse. Their conduct was above all praise; their probity amounted to heroism. We might have made them our faithful and devoted friends. It was our duty, as well as in our interests, to have done so. We did not understand this; we humiliated, ruined, exasperated them. It was a fault for which we must atone. Who knows but, in Jean Lacheneur's place, I should have done what he has done?"

He was silent for a moment; then, with one of those sudden inspirations that sometimes enable one almost to read the future, he resumed:

"I know Jean Lacheneur. I alone can fathom his hatred, and I know that he lives only in the hope of vengeance. It is true that we are very high and he is very low, but that matters little. We have everything to fear. Our millions form a rampart around us, but he will know how to open a breach. And no precautions will save us. At the very moment when we feel ourselves secure, he will be ready to strike. What he will attempt, I know not; but his will be a terrible revenge. Remember my words, Blanche, if ruin ever threatens our house, it will be Jean Lacheneur's work."

Aunt Medea and her niece were too horror-stricken to articulate a word, and for five minutes no sound broke the stillness save Martial's monotonous tread, as he paced up and down the room.

At last he paused before his wife.

"I have just ordered post-horses. You will excuse me for leaving you here alone. I must go to Sairmeuse at once. I shall not be absent more than a week."

He departed from Paris a few hours later, and Blanche was left a prey to the most intolerable anxiety. She suffered more now than during the days that immediately followed her crime. It was not against phantoms she was obliged to protect herself now; Chupin existed, and his voice, even if it were not as terrible as the voice of conscience, might make itself heard at any moment.

If she had known where to find him, she would have gone to him, and endeavoured, by the payment of a large sum of money, to persuade him to leave France.

But Chupin had left the hôtel without giving her his address.

The gloomy apprehension expressed by Martial increased the fears of the young marquise. The mere sound of the name Lacheneur made her shrink with terror. She could not rid herself of the idea that Jean Lacheneur suspected her guilt, and that he was watching her.

Her wish to find Marie-Anne's infant was stronger than ever.

It seemed to her that the child might be a protection to her some day. But where could she find an agent in whom she could confide?

At last she remembered that she had heard her father speak of a detective by the name of Chefteux, an exceedingly shrewd fellow, capable of anything, even of honesty, if he were well paid.

The man was really a miserable wretch, one of Fouché's vilest instruments, who had served and betrayed all parties, and who, at last, had been convicted of perjury, but had somehow managed to escape punishment.

After his dismissal from the police-force, Chefteux founded a bureau of private information.

After several inquiries, Mme. Blanche discovered that he lived in the Place Dauphine; and she determined to take advantage of her husband's absence to pay the detective a visit.

One morning she donned her simplest dress, and, accompanied by Aunt Medea, repaired to the house of Chefteux.

He was then about thirty-four years of age, a man of medium height, of inoffensive mien, and who affected an unvarying good-humour.

He invited his clients into a nicely-furnished drawing-room, and Mme. Blanche at once began telling him that she was married, and living in the Rue Saint-Denis, that one of her sisters, who had lately died, had been guilty of an indiscretion, and that she was ready to make any sacrifice to find this sister's child, etc., etc. A long story, which she had prepared in advance, and which sounded very plausible.

Chefteux did not believe a word of it, however; for, as soon as it was ended, he tapped her familiarly on the shoulder, and said:

"In short, my dear, we have had our little escapades before our marriage."

She shrank back as if from some venomous reptile.

To be treated thus! she—a Courtornieu—Duchesse de Sairmeuse!

"I think you are labouring under a wrong impression," she said, haughtily.

He made haste to apologize; but while listening to further details given him by the young lady, he thought:

"What an eye! what a voice!—they are not suited to a denizen of the Saint-Denis!"

His suspicions were confirmed by the reward of twenty thousand francs, which Mme. Blanche imprudently promised him in case of success, and by the five hundred francs which she paid in advance.

"And where shall I have the honour of addressing my communications to you, Madame?" he inquired.

"Nowhere," replied the young lady. "I shall be passing here from time to time, and I will call."

When they left the house, Chefteux followed them.

"For once," he thought, "I believe that fortune smiles upon me."

To discover the name and rank of his new clients was but child's play to Fouché's former pupil.

His task was all the easier since they had no suspicion whatever of his designs. Mme. Blanche, who had heard his powers of discernment so highly praised, was confident of success.

All the way back to the hotel she was congratulating herself upon the step she had taken.

"In less than a month," she said to Aunt Medea, "we shall have the child; and it will be a protection to us."

But the following week she realized the extent of her imprudence. On visiting Chefteux again, she was received with such marks of respect that she saw at once she was known.

She made an attempt to deceive him, but the detective checked her.

"First of all," he said, with a good-humoured smile, "I ascertain the identity of the persons who honour me with their confidence. It is a proof of my ability, which I give, gratis. But Madame need have no fears. I am discreet by nature and by profession. Many ladies of the highest ranks are in the position of Madame la Duchesse!"

So Chefteux still believed that the Duchesse de Sairmeuse was searching for her own child.

She did not try to convince him to the contrary. It was better that he should believe this than suspect the truth.

The condition of Mme. Blanche was now truly pitiable. She found herself entangled in a net, and each movement, far from freeing her, tightened the meshes around her.

Three persons knew the secret that threatened her life and honour. Under these circumstances, how could she hope to keep that secret inviolate? She was, moreover, at the mercy of three unscrupulous masters; and before a word, or a gesture, or a look from them, her haughty spirit was compelled to bow in meek subservience.

And her time was no longer at her own disposal. Martial had returned; and they had taken up their abode at the Hôtel de Sairmeuse.

The young duchess was now compelled to live under the scrutiny of fifty servants—of forty enemies, more or less, interested in watching her, in criticising her every act, and in discovering her inmost thoughts.

Aunt Medea, it is true, was of great assistance to her. Blanche purchased a dress for her, whenever she purchased one for herself, took her about with her on all occasions, and the humble relative expressed

her satisfaction in the most enthusiastic terms, and declared her willingness to do anything for her benefactress.

Nor did Chefteux give Mme. Blanche much more annoyance. Every three months he presented a memorandum of the expenses of investigations, which usually amounted to about ten thousand francs; and so long as she paid him it was plain that he would be silent.

He had given her to understand, however, that he should expect an annuity of twenty-four thousand francs; and once, when Mme. Blanche remarked that he must abandon the search, if nothing had been discovered at the end of two years:

"Never," he replied: "I shall continue the search as long as I live." But Chupin, unfortunately, remained; and he was a constant terror.

She had been compelled to give him twenty thousand francs, to begin with.

He declared that his younger brother had come to Paris in pursuit of him, accusing him of having stolen their father's hoard, and demanding his share with his dagger in his hand.

There had been a battle, and it was with a head bound up in a blood-stained linen, that Chupin made his appearance before Mme. Blanche.

"Give me the sum that the old man buried, and I will allow my brother to think that I had stolen it. It is not very pleasant to be regarded as a thief, when one is an honest man, but I will bear it for your sake. If you refuse, I shall be compelled to tell him where I have obtained my money, and how."

If he possessed all the vices, depravity, and cold-blooded perversity of his father, this wretch had inherited neither his intelligence nor his *finesse*.

Instead of taking the precautions which his interest required, he seemed to find a brutal pleasure in compromising the duchess.

He was a constant visitor at the Hôtel de Sairmeuse. He came and went at all hours, morning, noon, and night, without troubling himself in the least about Martial.

And the servants were amazed to see their haughty mistress unhesitatingly leave everything at the call of this suspicious-looking character, who smelled so strongly of tobacco and vile brandy.

One evening, while a grand entertainment was in progress at the Hôtel de Sairmeuse, he made his appearance, half drunk, and imperiously ordered the servants to go and tell Mme. Blanche that he was there, and that he was waiting for her.

She hastened to him in her magnificent evening-dress, her face white with rage and shame beneath her tiara of diamonds. And when, in her exasperation, she refused to give the wretch what he demanded:

"That is to say, I am to starve while you are revelling here!" he exclaimed. "I am not such a fool. Give me money, and instantly, or I will tell all I know here and now!"

What could she do? She was obliged to yield, as she had always done before.

And yet he grew more and more insatiable every day. Money remained in his pockets no longer than water remains in a sieve. But he did not think of elevating his vices to the proportions of the fortune which he squandered. He did not even provide himself with decent clothing; from his appearance one would have supposed him a beggar, and his companions were the vilest and most degraded of beings.

One night he was arrested in a low den, and the police, surprized at seeing so much gold in the possession of such a beggarly looking wretch, accused him of being a thief. He mentioned the name of the Duchesse de Sairmeuse.

An inspector of the police presented himself at the Hôtel de Sairmeuse the following morning. Martial, fortunately, was in Vienna at the time.

And Mme. Blanche was forced to undergo the terrible humiliation of confessing that she had given a large sum of money to this man, whose family she had known, and who, she added, had once rendered her an important service.

Sometimes her tormentor changed his tactics.

For example, he declared that he disliked to come to the Hôtel de Sairmeuse, that the servants treated him as if he were a mendicant; that after this he would write.

And in a day or two there would come a letter bidding her bring such a sum, to such a place, at such an hour.

And the proud duchess was always punctual at the rendezvous.

There was constantly some new invention, as if he found an intense delight in proving his power and in abusing it.

He had met, Heaven knows where! a certain Aspasie Clapard, to whom he took a violent fancy, and although she was much older than himself, he wished to marry her. Mme. Blanche paid for the wedding-feast.

Again he announced his desire of estab-

lishing himself in business, having resolved, he said, to live by his own exertions. He purchased the stock of a wine merchant, which the duchess paid for, and which he drank in no time.

His wife gave birth to a child, and Mme. de Sairmeuse must pay for the baptism as she had paid for the wedding, only too happy that Chupin did not require her to stand as godmother to little Polyte. He had entertained this idea at first.

On two occasions Mme. Blanche accompanied her husband to Vienna and to London, whither he went charged with important diplomatic missions. She remained three years in foreign lands.

Each week during all that time she received one letter, at least, from Chupin.

Ah! many a time she envied the lot of her victim! What was Marie-Anne's death compared with the life she led?

Her sufferings were measured by years, Marie-Anne's by minutes; and she said to herself, again and again, that the torture of poison could not be as intolerable as her agony.

CHAPTER LIII

How was it that Martial had failed to discover or to suspect this state of affairs?

A moment's reflection will explain this fact which is so extraordinary in appearance, so natural in reality.

The head of a family, whether he dwells in an attic or in a palace, is always the last to know what is going on in his home. What everybody else knows he does not even suspect. The master often sleeps while his house is on fire. Some terrible catastrophe—an explosion—is necessary to arouse him from his fancied security.

The life that Martial led was likely to prevent him from arriving at the truth. He was a stranger to his wife. His manner toward her was perfect, full of deference and chivalrous courtesy; but they had nothing in common except a name and certain interests.

Each lived their own life. They met only at dinner, or at the entertainments which they gave and which were considered the most brilliant in Paris society.

The duchess had her own apartments, her servants, her carriages, her horses, her own stable.

At twenty-five, Martial, the last descendant of the great house of Sairmeuse—a man upon whom destiny had apparently lavished every blessing—the possessor of youth, unbounded wealth, and a brilliant intellect, succumbed beneath the burden of an incurable despondency and *ennui*.

The death of Marie-Anne had destroyed all his hopes of happiness; and realizing the emptiness of his life, he did his best to fill the void with bustle and excitement. He threw himself headlong into politics, striving to find in power and in satisfied ambition some relief from his despondency.

It is only just to say that Mme. Blanche had remained superior to circumstances; and that she had played the *rôle* of a happy, contented woman with consummate skill.

Her intense sufferings and anxiety never marred the haughty serenity of her face. She soon won a place as one of the queens of Parisian society; and plunged into dissipation with a sort of frenzy. Was she endeavouring to divert her mind? Did she hope to overpower thought by excessive fatigue?

To Aunt Medea alone did Blanche reveal her secret heart.

"I am like a culprit who has been bound to the scaffold, and then abandoned by the executioner, who says, as he departs: 'Live until the axe falls of its own accord.'"

And the axe might fall at any moment. A word, a trifle, an unlucky chance—she cared not say "a decree of Providence," and Martial would know all.

Such, in all its unspeakable horror, was the position of the beautiful and envied Duchesse de Sairmeuse. "She must be perfectly happy," said the world; but she felt herself sliding down the precipice to the awful depths below.

Like a shipwrecked mariner clinging to a floating spar, she scanned the horizon with a despairing eye, and saw only angry and threatening clouds.

Time, perhaps, might bring her some relief.

Once it happened that six weeks went by, and she heard nothing from Chupin. A month and a half! What had become of him? To Mme. Blanche this silence was as ominous as the calm that precedes the storm.

A line in a newspaper solved the mystery.

Chupin was in prison.

The wretch, after drinking more heavily than usual one evening, had quarrelled with his brother, and had killed him by a blow upon the head with a piece of iron.

The blood of the betrayed Lacheneur was visited upon the heads of his murderer's children.

Tried by the Court of Assizes, Chupin

was condemned to twenty years of hard labour, and sent to Brest.

But this sentence afforded the duchess no relief. The culprit had written to her from his Paris prison; he wrote to her from Brest.

But he did not send his letters through the post. He confided them to comrades, whose terms of imprisonment had expired, and who came to the Hôtel de Sairmeuse demanding an interview with the duchess.

And she received them. They told all the miseries they had endured "out there"; and usually ended by requesting some slight assistance.

One morning, a man whose desperate appearance and manner frightened her, brought the duchess this laconic epistle:

"I am tired of starving here; I wish to make my escape. Come to Brest; you can visit the prison, and we will decide upon some plan. If you refuse to do this, I shall apply to the duke, who will obtain my pardon in exchange of what I will tell him."

Mme. Blanche was dumb with horror. It was impossible, she thought, to sink lower than this.

"Well!" demanded the man, harshly. "What reply shall I make to my comrade?"

"I will go—tell him that I will go!" she said, driven to desperation.

She made the journey, visited the prison, but did not find Chupin.

The previous week there had been a revolt in the prison, the troops had fired upon the prisoners, and Chupin had been killed instantly.

Still the duchess dared not rejoice.

She feared that her tormentor had told his wife the secret of his power.

"I shall soon know," she thought.

The widow promptly made her appearance; but her manner was humble and supplicating.

She had often heard her dear, dead husband say that madame was his benefactress, and now she came to beg a little aid to enable her to open a small drinking saloon.

Her son Polyte—ah! such a good son! just eighteen years old, and such a help to his poor mother—had discovered a little house in a good situation for the business, and if they only had three or four hundred francs——

Mme. Blanche gave her five hundred francs.

"Either her humility is a mask," she thought, "or her husband has told her nothing."

Five days later Polyte Chupin presented himself.

They needed three hundred francs more before they could commence business, and he came on behalf of his mother to entreat the kind lady to advance them.

Determined to discover exactly where she stood, the duchess shortly refused, and the young man departed without a word.

Evidently the mother and son were ignorant of the facts. Chupin's secret had died with him.

This happened early in January. Toward the last of February, Aunt Medea contracted inflammation of the lungs on leaving a fancy ball, which she attended in an absurd costume, in spite of all the attempts which her niece made to dissuade her.

Her passion for dress killed her. Her illness lasted only three days; but her sufferings, physical and mental, were terrible.

Constrained by her fear of death to examine her own conscience, she saw plainly that by profiting by the crime of her niece she had been as culpable as if she had aided her in committing it. She had been very devout in former years, and now her superstitious fears were re-awakened and intensified. Her faith returned, accompanied by a *cortège* of terrors.

"I am lost!" she cried; "I am lost!"

She tossed to and fro upon her bed; she writhed and shrieked as if she already saw hell opening to engulf her.

She called upon the Holy Virgin and upon all the saints to protect her. She entreated God to grant her time for repentance and for expiation. She begged to see a priest, swearing she would make a full confession.

Paler than the dying woman, but implacable, Blanche watched over her, aided by that one of her personal attendants in whom she had most confidence.

"If this lasts long, I shall be ruined," she thought. "I shall be obliged to call for assistance, and she will betray me."

It did not last long.

The patient's delirium was succeeded by such utter prostration that it seemed each moment would be her last.

But toward midnight she appeared to revive a little, and in a voice of intense feeling, she said:

"You have had no pity, Blanche. You have deprived me of all hope in the life to come. God will punish you. You, too, shall die like a dog; alone, without a word of Christian counsel or encouragement. I curse you!"

And she died just as the clock was striking two.

The time when Blanche would have given almost anything to know that Aunt Medea was beneath the sod, had long since passed.

Now, the death of the poor old woman affected her deeply.

She had lost an accomplice who had often consoled her, and she had gained nothing, since one of her maids was now acquainted with the secret of the crime at the Borderie.

Every one who was intimately acquainted with the Duchesse de Sairmeuse noticed her dejection, and was astonished by it.

"Is it not strange," remarked her friends, "that the duchess—such a very superior woman—should grieve so much for that absurd relative of hers?"

But the dejection of Mme. Blanche was due in great measure to the sinister prophecies of the accomplice to whom she had denied the last consolations of religion.

And as her mind reviewed the past she shuddered, as the peasants at Sairmeuse had done, when she thought of the fatality which had pursued the shedders of innocent blood.

What misfortune had attended them all—from the sons of Chupin, the miserable traitor, up to her father, the Marquis de Courtornieu, whose mind had not been illumined by the last gleam of reason for ten long years before his death.

"My turn will come!" she thought.

The Baron and the Baroness d'Escorval, and old Corporal Bavois had departed this life within a month of each other, the previous year, mourned by all.

So that of all the people of diverse condition who had been connected with the troubles at Montaignac, Blanche knew only four who were still alive.

Maurice d'Escorval, who had entered the magistracy, and was now a judge in the tribunal of the Seine; Abbé Midon, who had come to Paris with Maurice, and Martial and herself.

There was another person, the bare recollection of whom made her tremble, and whose name she dared not utter.

Jean Lacheneur, Marie-Anne's brother.

An inward voice, more powerful than reason, told her that this implacable enemy was still alive, watching for his hour of vengeance.

More troubled by her presentiments now, than she had been by Chupin's persecutions in days gone by, Mme. de Sairmeuse decided to apply to Chefteux in order to ascertain, if possible, what she had to expect.

Fouché's former agent had not wavered in his devotion to the duchess. Every three months he presented his bill, which was paid without discussion; and to ease his conscience, he sent one of his men to prowl around Sairmeuse for a while, at least once a year.

Animated by the hope of a magnificent reward, the spy promised his client, and, what was more to the purpose—promised himself, that he would discover this dreaded enemy.

He started in quest of him, and had already begun to collect proofs of Jean's existence, when his investigations were abruptly terminated.

One morning the body of a man literally hacked in pieces was found in an old well. It was the body of Chefteux.

"A fitting close to the career of such a wretch," said the *Journal des Debats*, in noting the event.

When she read this news, Mme. Blanche felt as a culprit would feel on reading his death-warrant.

"The end is near," she murmured. "Lacheneur is coming!"

The duchess was not mistaken.

Jean had told the truth when he declared that he was not disposing of his sister's estate for his own benefit. In his opinion, Marie-Anne's fortune must be consecrated to one sacred purpose; he would not divert the slightest portion of it to his individual needs.

He was absolutely penniless when the manager of a traveling theatrical company engaged him for a consideration of forty-five francs per month.

From that day he lived the precarious life of a strolling player. He was poorly paid, and often reduced to abject poverty by lack of engagements, or by the impecuniosity of managers.

His hatred had lost none of its virulence; but to wreak the desired vengeance upon his enemy, he must have time and money at his disposal.

But how could he accumulate money when he was often too poor to appease his hunger?

Still he did not renounce his hopes. His was a rancour which was only intensified by years. He was biding his time while he watched from the depths of his misery the brilliant fortunes of the house of Sairmeuse.

He had waited sixteen years, when one of his friends procured him an engagement in Russia.

The engagement was nothing; but the poor comedian was afterward fortunate enough to obtain an interest in a theatrical

enterprise, from which he realized a fortune of one hundred thousand francs in less than six years.

"Now," said he, "I can give up this life. I am rich enough, now, to begin the warfare."

And six weeks later he arrived in his native village.

Before carrying any of his atrocious designs into execution, he went to Sairmeuse to visit Marie-Anne's grave, in order to obtain there an increase of animosity, as well as the relentless *sang-froid* of a stern avenger of crime.

That was his only motive in going, but, on the very evening of his arrival, he learned through a garrulous old peasant woman that ever since his departure—that is to say, for a period of twenty years—two parties had been making persistent inquiries for a child which had been placed somewhere in the neighbourhood.

Jean knew that it was Marie-Anne's child they were seeking. Why they had not succeeded in finding it, he knew equally well.

But why were there two persons seeking the child? One was Maurice d'Escorval, of course, but who was the other?

Instead of remaining at Sairmeuse a week, Jean Lacheneur tarried there a month; and by the expiration of that month he had traced these inquiries concerning the child to the agent of Chefteux. Through him, he reached Fouché's former spy; and, finally, succeeded in discovering that the search had been instituted by no less a person than the Duchess de Sairmeuse.

This discovery bewildered him. How could Mme. Blanche have known that Marie-Anne had given birth to a child; and knowing it, what possible interest could she have had in finding it?

These two questions tormented Jean's mind continually; but he could discover no satisfactory answer.

"Chupin's son could tell me, perhaps," he thought. "I must pretend to be reconciled to the sons of the wretch, who betrayed my father."

But the traitor's children had been dead for several years, and after a long search, Jean found only the Widow Chupin and her son, Polyte.

They were keeping a drinking-saloon not far from the Château-des-Rentiers; and their establishment, known as the Poivrière, bore anything but an enviable reputation.

Lacheneur questioned the widow and her son in vain; they could give him no information whatever on the subject. He told them his name, but even this did not awaken the slightest recollection in their minds.

Jean was about to take his departure when Mother Chupin, probably in the hope of extracting a few pennies, began to deplore her present misery, which was, she declared, all the harder to bear since she had wanted for nothing during the life of her poor husband, who had always obtained as much money as he wanted from a lady of high degree—the Duchesse de Sairmeuse, in short.

Lacheneur uttered such a terrible oath that the old woman and her son started back in affright.

He saw at once the close connection between the researches of Mme. Blanche and her generosity to Chupin.

"It was she who poisoned Marie-Anne," he said to himself. "It was through my sister that she became aware of the existence of the child. She loaded Chupin with favours because he knew the crime she had committed—that crime in which his father had been only an accomplice."

He remembered Martial's oath at the bedside of the murdered girl, and his heart overflowed with savage exultation. He saw his two enemies, the last of the Sairmeuse and the last of the Courtornieu take in their own hands his work of vengeance.

But this was mere conjecture; he desired to be assured of the correctness of his suppositions.

He drew from his pocket a handful of gold, and, throwing it upon the table, he said:

"I am very rich; if you will obey me and keep my secret, your fortune is made."

A shrill cry of delight from mother and son outweighed any protestations of obedience.

The Widow Chupin knew how to write, and Lacheneur dictated this letter:

"MADAME LA DUCHESSE—I shall expect you at my establishment to-morrow between twelve and four o'clock. It is on business connected with the Borderie. If at five o'clock I have not seen you, I shall carry to the post a letter for the duke."

"And if she comes what am I to say to her?" asked the astonished widow.

"Nothing; you will merely ask her for money."

"If she comes, it is as I have guessed," he reflected.

She came.

Hidden in the loft of the Poivrière, Jean, through an opening in the floor, saw the duchess give a banknote to Mother Chupin.

"Now, she is in my power!" he thought exultantly. "Through what sloughs of degradation will I drag her before I deliver her up to her husband's vengeance!"

CHAPTER LIV

A few lines of the article consecrated to Martial de Sairmeuse in the "General Biography of the Men of the Century," give the history of his life after his marriage.

"Martial de Sairmeuse," it says, there, "brought to the service of his party a brilliant intellect and admirable endowments. Called to the front at the moment when political strife was raging with the utmost violence, he had courage to assume the sole responsibility of the most extreme measures.

"Compelled by almost universal opprobrium to retire from office, he left behind him animosities which will be extinguished only with life."

But what this article does not state is this: if Martial was wrong—and that depends entirely upon the point of view from which his conduct is regarded—he was doubly wrong, since he was not possessed of those ardent convictions verging upon fanaticism which make men fools, heroes, and martyrs.

He was not even ambitious.

Those associated with him, witnessing his passionate struggle and his unceasing activity, thought him actuated by an insatiable thirst for power.

He cared little or nothing for it. He considered its burdens heavy; its compensations small. His pride was too lofty to feel any satisfaction in the applause that delights the vain, and flattery disgusted him. Often, in his princely drawing-rooms, during some brilliant *fête*, his acquaintances noticed a shade of gloom steal over his features, and seeing him thus thoughtful and preoccupied, they respectfully refrained from disturbing him.

"His mind is occupied with momentous questions," they thought. "Who can tell what important decisions may result from this revery?"

They were mistaken.

At the very moment when his brilliant success made his rivals pale with envy—when it would seem that he had nothing left to wish for in this world, Martial was saying to himself:

"What an empty life! What weariness and vexation of Spirit! To live for others—what a mockery!"

He looked at his wife, radiant in her beauty, worshipped like a queen, and he sighed.

He thought of her who was dead—Marie-Anne—the only woman whom he had ever loved.

She was never absent from his mind. After all these years he saw her yet, cold, rigid, lifeless, in that luxurious room at the Borderie; and time, far from effacing the image of the fair girl who had won his youthful heart, made it still more radiant and endowed his lost idol with almost superhuman grace of person and of character.

If fate had but given him Marie-Anne for his wife! He said this to himself again and again, picturing the exquisite happiness which a life with her would have afforded him.

They would have remained at Sairmeuse. They would have had lovely children playing around them! He would not be condemned to this continual warfare—to this hollow, unsatisfying, restless life.

The truly happy are not those who parade their satisfaction and good fortune before the eyes of the multitude. The truly happy hide themselves from the curious gaze, and they are right; happiness is almost a crime.

So thought Martial; and he, the great statesman, often said to himself, in a sort of rage:

"To love, and to be loved—that is everything! All else is vanity."

He had really tried to love his wife; he had done his best to rekindle the admiration with which she had inspired him at their first meeting. He had not succeeded.

Between them there seemed to be a wall of ice which nothing could melt, and which was constantly increasing in height and thickness.

"Why is it?" he wondered, again and again. "It is incomprehensible. There are days when I could swear that she loved me. Her character, formerly so irritable, is entirely changed; she is gentleness itself."

But he could not conquer his aversion; it was stronger than his own will.

These unavailing regrets, and the disappointments and sorrow that preyed upon him, undoubtedly aggravated the bitterness and severity of Martial's policy.

But he, at least, knew how to fall nobly.

He passed, without even a change of countenance, from almost omnipotence to a position so compromising that his very life was endangered.

On seeing his ante-chambers, formerly thronged with flatterers and office-seekers,

empty and deserted, he laughed, and his laugh was unaffected.

"The ship is sinking," said he; "the rats have deserted it."

He did not even pale when the noisy crowd came to hoot and curse and hurl stones at his windows; and when Otto, his faithful *valet de chambre*, entreated him to assume a disguise and make his escape through the gardens, he responded:

"By no means! I am simply odious; I do not wish to become ridiculous!"

They could not even dissuade him from going to a window and looking down upon the rabble in the street below.

A singular idea had just occurred to him.

"If Jean Lacheneur is still alive," he thought, "how much he would enjoy this! And if he is alive, he is undoubtedly there in the foremost rank, urging on the crowd."

And he wished to see.

But Jean Lacheneur was in Russia at that epoch. The excitement subsided; the Hôtel de Sairmeuse was not seriously threatened. Still Martial realized that it would be better for him to go away for a while, and allow people to forget him.

He did not ask the duchess to accompany him.

"The fault has been mine entirely," he said to her, "and to make you suffer for it by condemning you to exile would be unjust. Remain here; I think it will be much better for you to remain here."

She did not offer to go with him. It would have been a pleasure to her, but she dared not leave Paris. She knew that she must remain in order to insure the silence of her persecutors. Both times she had left Paris before, all came near being discovered, and yet she had had Aunt Medea, then, to take her place.

Martial went away, accompanied only by his devoted servant, Otto In intelligence, this man was decidedly superior to his position; he possessed an independent fortune, and he had a hundred reasons—one, by the way, was a very pretty one—for desiring to remain in Paris; but his master was in trouble, and he did not hesitate.

For four years the Duc de Sairmeuse wandered over Europe, ever accompanied by his *ennui* and his dejection, and chafing beneath the burden of a life no longer animated by interest or sustained by hope.

He remained awhile in London, then he went to Vienna, afterward to Venice. One day he was seized by an irresistible desire to see Paris again, and he returned.

It was not a very prudent step, perhaps. His bitterest enemies—personal enemies, whom he had mortally offended and persecuted—were in power; but he did not hesitate. Besides, how could they injure him, since he had no favours to ask, no cravings of ambition to satisfy?

The exile which had weighed so heavily upon him, the sorrow, the disappointments and loneliness he had endured had softened his nature and inclined his heart to tenderness; and he returned firmly resolved to overcome his aversion to his wife, and seek a reconciliation.

"Old age is approaching," he thought. "If I have not a beloved wife at my fireside, I may at least have a friend."

His manner toward her, on his return, astonished Mme. Blanche. She almost believed she saw again the Martial of the little blue *salon* at Courtornieu; but the realization of her cherished dream was now only another torture added to all the others.

Martial was striving to carry his plan into execution, when the following laconic epistle came to him one day through the post:

"Monsieur Le Duc—I, if I were in your place, would watch my wife."

It was only an anonymous letter, but Martial's blood mounted to his forehead.

"Can it be that she has a lover?" he thought.

Then reflecting on his own conduct toward his wife since their marriage, he said to himself:

"And if she has, have I any right to complain? Did I not tacitly give her back her liberty?"

He was greatly troubled, and yet he would not have degraded himself so much as to play the spy, had it not been for one of those trifling circumstances which so often decide a man's destiny.

He was returning from a ride on horseback one morning about eleven o'clock, and he was not thirty paces from the Hôtel de Sairmeuse when he saw a lady hurriedly emerge from the house. She was very plainly dressed—entirely in black—but her whole appearance was strikingly that of the duchess.

"It is certainly my wife; but why is she dressed in such a fashion?" he thought.

Had he been on foot he would certainly have entered the house; as it was, he slowly followed Mme. Blanche, who was going up the Rue Grenelle. She walked very quickly, and without turning her head, and kept her face persistently shrouded in a very thick veil.

When she reached the Rue Taranne, she threw herself into one of the *fiacres* at the carriage-stand.

The coachman came to the door to speak to her; then nimbly sprang upon the box, and gave his bony horses one of those cuts of the whip that announce a princely *pour-boire.*

The carriage had already turned the corner of the Rue du Dragon, and Martial, ashamed and irresolute, had not moved from the place where he had stopped his horse, just around the corner of the Rue Saint Pares.

Not daring to admit his suspicions, he tried to deceive himself.

"Nonsense!" he thought, giving the reins to his horse, "what do I risk in advancing? The carriage is a long way off by this time, and I shall not overtake it."

He did overtake it, however, on reaching the intersection of the Croix-Rouge, where there was, as usual, a crowd of vehicles.

It was the same *fiacre;* Martial recognized it by its green body, and its wheels striped with white.

Emerging from the crowd of carriages, the driver whipped up his horses, and it was at a gallop that they flew up the Rue du Vieux Columbier—the narrowest street that borders the Place Saint Sulpice—and gained the outer boulevards.

Martial's thoughts were busy as he trotted along about a hundred yards behind the vehicle.

"She is in a terrible hurry," he said to himself. "This, however, is scarcely the quarter for a lover's rendezvous."

The carriage had passed the Place d'Italie. It entered the Rue du Château-des-Rentiers and soon paused before a tract of unoccupied ground.

The door was at once opened, and the Duchesse de Sairmeuse hastily alighted.

Without stopping to look to the right or to the left, she hurried across the open space.

A man, by no means prepossessing in appearance, with a long beard, and with a pipe in his mouth, and clad in a workman's blouse, was seated upon a large block of stone not far off.

"Will you hold my horse a moment?" inquired Martial.

"Certainly," answered the man.

Had Martial been less preoccupied, his suspicions might have been aroused by the malicious smile that curved the man's lips: and had he examined his features closely, he would perhaps have recognized him.

For it was Jean Lacheneur.

Since addressing that anonymous letter to the Duc de Sairmeuse, he had made the duchess multiply her visits to the Widow Chupin; and each time he had watched for her coming.

"So, if her husband decides to follow her I shall know it," he thought.

It was indispensable for the success of his plans that Mme. Blanche should be watched by her husband.

For Jean Lacheneur had decided upon his course. From a thousand schemes for revenge he had chosen the most frightful and ignoble that a brain maddened and enfevered by hatred could possibly conceive.

He longed to see the haughty Duchesse de Sairmeuse subjected to the vilest ignominy, Martial in the hands of the lowest of the low. He pictured a bloody struggle in this miserable den; the sudden arrival of the police, summoned by himself, who would arrest all the parties indiscriminately. He gloated over the thought of a trial in which the crime committed at the Borderie would be brought to light; he saw the duke and the duchess in prison, and the great names of Sairmeuse and of Courtornieu shrouded in eternal disgrace.

And he believed that nothing was wanting to insure the success of his plans. He had at his disposal two miserable wretches who were capable of any crime; and an unfortunate youth named Gustave, made his willing slave by poverty and cowardice, was intended to play the part of Marie-Anne's son.

These three accomplices had no suspicion of his real intentions. As for the Widow Chupin and her son, if they suspected some infamous plot, the name of the duchess was all they really knew in regard to it. Moreover, Jean held Polyte and his mother completely under his control by the wealth which he had promised them if they served him docilely.

And if Martial followed his wife into the Poivrière, Jean had so arranged matters that the duke would at first suppose that she had been led there by charity.

"But he will not go in," thought Lacheneur, whose heart throbbed wildly with sinister joy as he held Martial's horse. "Monsieur le Duc is too fine for that."

And Martial did not go in. Though he was horrified when he saw his wife enter that vile den, as if she were at home there, he said to himself that he should learn nothing by following her.

He, therefore, contented himself by mak-

ing a thorough examination of the outside of the house; then, remounting his horse, he departed on a gallop. He was completely mystified; he did not know what to think, what to imagine, what to believe.

But he was fully resolved to fathom this mystery; and as soon as he returned home he sent Otto out in search of information. He could confide everything to this devoted servant; he had no secrets from him.

About four o'clock his faithful *valet de chambre* returned, an expression of profound consternation visible upon his countenance.

"What is it?" asked Martial, divining some great misfortune.

"Ah, sir, the mistress of that wretched den is the widow of Chupin's son——"

Martial's face became as white as his linen.

He knew life too well not to understand that since the duchess had been compelled to submit to the power of these people, they must be masters of some secret which she was willing to make any sacrifice to preserve. But what secret?

The years which had silvered Martial's hair, had not cooled the ardour of his blood. He was, as he had always been, a man of impulses.

He rushed to his wife's apartments.

"Madame has just gone down to receive the Countess de Mussidan and the Marquise d'Arlange," said the maid.

"Very well; I will wait for her here. Retire."

And Martial entered the chamber of Mme. Blanche.

The room was in disorder, for the duchess, after returning from the Poivrière, was still engaged in her toilet when the visitors were announced.

The wardrobe-doors were open, the chairs were encumbered with wearing apparel, the articles which Mme. Blanche used daily—her watch, her purse, and several bunches of keys—were lying upon the dressing-table and mantel.

Martial did not sit down. His self-possession was returning.

"No folly," he thought, "if I question her, I shall learn nothing. I must be silent and watchful."

He was about to retire, when, on glancing about the room, his eyes fell upon a large casket, inlaid with silver, which had belonged to his wife ever since she was a young girl, and which accompanied her everywhere.

"That, doubtless, holds the solution of the mystery," he said to himself.

It was one of those moments when a man obeys the dictates of passion without pausing to reflect. He saw the keys upon the mantel; he seized them, and endeavoured to find one that would fit the lock of the casket. The fourth key opened it. It was full of papers.

With feverish haste, Martial examined the contents. He had thrown aside several unimportant letters, when he came to a bill that read as follows:

"Search for the child of Madame de Sairmeuse. Expenses for the third quarter of the year 18—."

Martial's brain reeled.

A child! His wife had a child!

He read on: "For services of two agents at Sairmeuse, ——. For expenses attending my own journey, ——. Divers gratuities, ——. Etc., etc." The total amounted to six thousand francs. The bill was signed "Chefteux."

With a sort of cold rage, Martial continued his examination of the contents of the casket, and found a note written in a miserable hand, that said: "Two thousand francs this evening, or I will tell the duke the history of the affair at the Borderie." Then several more bills from Chefteux; then a letter from Aunt Medea in which she spoke of prison and of remorse. And finally, at the bottom of the casket, he found the marriage-certificate of Marie-Anne Lacheneur and Maurice d'Escorval, drawn up by the Curé of Vigano and signed by the old physician and Corporal Bavois.

The truth was as clear as daylight.

Stunned, frozen with horror, Martial scarcely had strength to return the letters to the casket and restore it to its place.

Then he tottered back to his own room, clinging to the walls for support.

"It was she who murdered Marie-Anne," he murmured.

He was confounded, terror-stricken by the perfidy and baseness of this woman who was his wife—by her criminal audacity, by her cool calculation and assurance, by her marvelous powers of dissimulation.

He swore he would discover all, either through the duchess or through the Widow Chupin; and he ordered Otto to procure a costume for him such as was generally worn by the *habitués* of the Poivrière. He did not know how soon he might have use for it.

This happened early in February, and from that moment Mme. Blanche did not take a single step without being watched. Not a letter reached her that her husband had not previously read.

And she had not the slightest suspicion of the constant espionage to which she was subjected.

Martial did not leave his room; he pretented to be ill. To meet his wife and be silent, was beyond his powers. He remembered the oath of vengeance which he had pronounced over Marie-Anne's lifeless form too well.

But there were no new revelations, and for this reason: Polyte Chupin had been arrested under charge of theft, and this accident caused a delay in the execution of Lacheneur's plans. But, at last, he judged that all would be in readiness on the 20th of February, Shrove Sunday.

The evening before the Widow Chupin, in conformance with his instructions, wrote to the duchess that she must come to the Poivrière Sunday evening at eleven o'clock.

On that same evening Jean was to meet his accomplices at a ball at the Rainbow—a public-house bearing a very unenviable reputation—and give them their last instructions.

These accomplices were to open the scene; he was to appear only in the *dénouement*.

"All is well arranged; the mechanism will work of its own accord," he said to himself.

But the "mechanism," as he styled it, failed to work. Mme. Blanche, on receiving the Widow Chupin's summons, revolted for a moment. The lateness of the hour, the isolation of the spot designated, frightened her.

But she was obliged to submit, and on the appointed evening she furtively left the house, accompanied by Camille, the same servant who had witnessed Aunt Medea's last agony.

The duchess and her maid were attired like women of the very lowest order, and felt no fear of being seen or recognized.

And yet a man was watching them, and he quickly followed them. It was Martial.

Knowing of this rendezvous even before his wife, he had disguised himself in the costume Otto had procured for him, which was that of a labourer about the quays; and, as he was a man who did perfectly whatever he attempted to do, he had succeeded in rendering himself unrecognizable. His hair and beard were rough and matted; his hands were soiled and grimed with dirt; he was really the abject wretch whose rags he wore.

Otto had begged to be allowed to accompany him; but the duke refused, saying that the revolver which he would take with him would be sufficient protection. He knew Otto well enough, however, to be certain he would disobey him.

Ten o'clock was sounding when Mme. Blanche and Camille left the house, and it did not take them five minutes to reach the Rue Taranne.

There was one *fiacre* on the stand—one only.

They entered it and it drove away.

This circumstance drew from Martial an oath worthy of his costume. Then he reflected that, since he knew where to find his wife, a slight delay in finding a carriage did not matter.

He soon obtained one; and the coachman, thanks to a *pourboire* of ten francs, drove to the Rue du Château-des-Rentiers as fast as his horses could go.

But the duke had scarcely set foot on the ground before he heard the rumbling of another carriage which stopped abruptly at a little distance.

"Otto is evidently following me," he thought.

And he started across the open space in the direction of the Poivrière.

Gloom and silence prevailed on every side, and were made still more oppressive by a chill fog that heralded an approaching thaw. Martial stumbled and slipped at almost every step upon the rough, snow-covered ground.

It was not long before he could distinguish a dark mass in the midst of the fog. It was the Poivrière. The light within filtered through the heart-shaped openings in the blinds, looking at a distance like lurid eyes gleaming in the darkness.

Could it really be possible that the Duchess de Sairmeuse was there!

Martial cautiously approached the window, and clinging to the hinges of one of the shutters, he lifted himself up so he could peer through the opening.

Yes, his wife was indeed there in that vile den.

She and Camille were seated at a table before a large punch-bowl, and in company with two ragged, leering scoundrels, and a soldier, quite youthful in appearance.

In the center of the room stood the Widow Chupin, with a small glass in her hand, talking volubly and punctuating her sentences by copious draughts of brandy.

The impression produced upon Martial was so profound that his hold relaxed and he dropped to the ground.

A ray of pity penetrated his soul, for

he vaguely realized the intense suffering which had been the chastisement of the murderess.

But he desired another glance at the interior of the hovel, and he again lifted himself up to the opening and looked in.

The old woman had disappeared; the young soldier had risen from the table and was talking and gesticulating earnestly. Mme. Blanche and Camille were listening to him with the closest attention.

The two men who were sitting face to face, with their elbows upon the table, were looking at each other; and Martial saw them exchange a significant glance.

He was not wrong. The scoundrels were plotting "a rich haul."

Mme. Blanche, who had dressed herself with such care, that to render her disguise perfect she had encased her feet in large, coarse shoes, that were almost killing her—Mme. Blanche had forgotten to remove her superb diamond ear-rings.

She had forgotten them, but Lacheneur's accomplices had noticed them, and were now regarding them with eyes that glittered more brilliantly than the diamonds themselves.

While awaiting Lacheneur's coming, these wretches, as had been agreed upon, were playing the part which he had imposed upon them. For this, and their assistance afterward, they were to receive a certain sum of money.

But they were thinking that this sum was not, perhaps, a quarter part of the value of these jewels, and they exchanged glances that said:

"Ah! if we could only get them and make our escape before Lacheneur comes!"

The temptation was too strong to be resisted.

One of them rose suddenly, and seizing the duchess by the back of the neck, he forced her head down upon the table.

The diamonds would have been torn from the ears of Mme. Blanche had it not been for Camille, who bravely came to the aid of her mistress.

Martial could endure no more. He sprang to the door of the hovel, opened it, and entered, bolting it behind him.

"Martial!"

"Monsieur le Duc!"

These cries escaping the lips of Mme. Blanche and Camille in the same breath, changed the momentary stupor of their asssailants into fury; and they both precipitated themselves upon Martial, determined to kill him.

With a spring to one side, Martial avoided them. He had his revolver in his hand; he fired twice and the wretches fell.

But he was not yet safe, for the young soldier threw himself upon him, and attempted to disarm him.

Through all the furious struggle, Martial did not cease crying, in a panting voice:

"Fly! Blanche, fly! Otto is not far off. The name—save the honour of the name!"

The two women obeyed, making their escape through the back door, which opened upon the garden; and they had scarcely done so, before a violent knocking was heard at the front door.

The police were coming! This increased Martial's frenzy: and with one supreme effort to free himself from his assailant, he gave him such a violent push that his adversary fell, striking his head against the corner of the table, after which he lay like one dead.

But the Widow Chupin, who had come downstairs on hearing the uproar, was shrieking upon the stairs. At the door some one was crying: "Open in the name of the law!"

Martial might have fled; but if he fled, the duchess might be captured, for he would certainly be pursued. He saw the peril at a glance, and his decision was made.

He shook the Widow Chupin violently by the arm, and said, in an imperious voice:

"If you know how to hold your tongue you shall have one hundred thousand francs."

Then, drawing a table before the door opening into the adjoining room, he intrenched himself behind it as behind a rampart, and awaited the approach of the enemy.

The next moment the door was forced open, and a squad of police, under the command of Inspector Gevrol, entered the room.

"Surrender!" cried the inspector.

Martial did not move; his pistol was turned upon the intruder.

"If I can parley with them, and hold them in check only two minutes, all may yet be saved," he thought.

He obtained the wished-for delay; then he threw his weapon to the ground, and was about to bound through the back-door, when a policeman, who had gone round to the rear of the house, seized him about the body, and threw him to the floor.

From this side he expected only assistance, so he cried:

"Lost! It is the Prussians who are coming!"

In the twinkling of an eye he was bound; and two hours later he was an inmate of the station-house at the Place d'Italie.

He had played his part so perfectly, that he had deceived even Gevrol. The other participants in the broil were dead, and he could rely upon the Widow Chupin. But he knew that the trap had been set for him by Jean Lacheneur; and he read a whole volume of suspicion in the eyes of the young officer who had cut off his retreat, and who was called Lecoq by his companions.

CHAPTER LV

THE Duc de Sairmeuse was one of those men who remain superior to all fortuitous circumstances, good or bad. He was a man of vast experience, and great natural shrewdness. His mind was quick to act, and fertile in resources. But when he found himself immured in the damp and loathsome station-house, after the terrible scenes at the Poivrière, he relinquished all hope.

Martial knew that Justice does not trust to appearances, and that when she finds herself confronted by a mystery, she does not rest until she had fathomed it.

Martial knew, only too well, that if his identity was established, the authorities would endeavor to discover the reason of his presence at the Poivrière. That this reason would soon be discovered, he could not doubt, and, in that case, the crime at the Borderie, and the guilt of the duchess, would undoubtedly be made public.

This meant the Court of Assizes, prison, a frightful scandal, dishonour, eternal disgrace!

And the power he had wielded in former days was a positive disadvantage to him now. His place was now filled by his political adversaries. Among them were two personal enemies upon whom he had inflicted those terrible wounds of vanity which are never healed. What an opportunity for revenge this would afford them!

At the thought of this ineffaceable stain upon the great name of Sairmeuse, which was his pride and his glory, reason almost forsook him.

"My God, inspire me," he murmured. "How shall I save the honour of the name?"

He saw but one chance of salvation—death. They now believed him one of the miserable wretches that haunt the suburbs of Paris; if he were dead they would not trouble themselves about his identity.

"It is the only way!" he thought.

He was endeavouring to find some means of accomplishing his plan of self-destruction, when he heard a bustle and confusion outside. In a few moments the door was opened and a man was thrust into the same cell—a man who staggered a few steps, fell heavily to the floor, and began to snore loudly. It was only a drunken man.

But a gleam of hope illumined Martial's heart, for in the drunken man he recognized Otto—disguised, almost unrecognizable.

It was a bold ruse and no time must be lost in profiting by it. Martial stretched himself upon a bench, as if to sleep, in such a way that his head was scarcely a yard from that of Otto.

"The duchess is out of danger," murmured the faithful servant.

"For to-day, perhaps. But to-morrow, through me, all will be known."

"Have you told them who you are?"

"No; all the policemen but one took me for a vagabond."

"You must continue to personate this character."

"What good will it do? Lacheneur will betray me."

But Martial, though he little knew it, had no need to fear Lacheneur for the present, at least. A few hours before, on his way from the Rainbow to the Poivrière, Jean had been precipitated to the bottom of a stone quarry, and had fractured his skull. The labourers, on returning to their work early in the morning, found him lying there senseless; and at that very moment they were carrying him to the hospital.

Although Otto was ignorant of this circumstance, he did not seem discouraged.

"There will be some way of getting rid of Lacheneur," said he, "if you will only sustain your present character. An escape is an easy matter when a man has millions at his command."

"They will ask me who I am, whence I came, how I have lived."

"You speak English and German; tell them that you have just returned from foreign lands; that you were a foundling, and that you have always lived a roving life."

"How can I prove this?"

Otto drew a little nearer his master, and said, impressively:

"We must agree upon our plans, for our success depends upon a perfect understanding between us. I have a sweetheart in

Paris—and no one knows our relations. She is as sharp as steel. Her name is Milner, and she keeps the Hôtel de Mariembourg, on the Saint-Quentin. You can say that you arrived here from Leipsic on Sunday; that you went to this hotel; that you left your trunk there, and that this trunk is marked with the name of May, foreign artist."

"Capital!" said Martial, approvingly.

And then, with extraordinary quickness and precision, they agreed, point by point, upon their plan of defence.

When all had been arranged, Otto pretended to awake from the heavy sleep of intoxication; he clamoured to be released, and the keeper finally opened the door and set him at liberty.

Before leaving the station-house, however, he succeeded in throwing a note to the Widow Chupin, who was imprisoned in the other compartment.

So, when Lecoq, after his skilful investigations at the Poivrière, rushed to the Place d'Italie, panting with hope and ambition, he found himself outwitted by these men, who were inferior to him in penetration, but whose *finesse* was superior to his own.

Martial's plans being fully formed, he intended to carry them out with absolute perfection of detail, and, after his removal to prison, the Duc de Sairmeuse was preparing himself for the visit of the judge of instruction, when Maurice d'Escorval entered.

They recognized each other. They were both greatly agitated, and the examination was an examination only in name. After the departure of Maurice, Martial attempted to destroy himself. He had no faith in the generosity of his former enemy.

But when he found M. Segmuller occupying Maurice's place the next morning, Martial believed that he was saved.

Then began that struggle between the judge and Lecoq on one side, and the accused on the other—a struggle from which neither party came out conqueror.

Martial knew that Lecoq was the only person he had to fear, still he bore him no ill-will. Faithful to his nature, which compelled him to be just even to his enemies, he could not help admiring the astonishing penetration and perseverance of this young policeman who, undismayed by the obstacles and discouragements that surrounded him, struggled on, unassisted, to reach the truth.

But Lecoq was always outwitted by Otto, the mysterious accomplice, who seemed to know his every movement in advance.

At the morgue, at the Hôtel de Mariembourg, with Toinon, the wife of Polyte Chupin, as well as with Polyte Chupin himself, Lecoq was just a little too late.

Lecoq detected the secret correspondence between the prisoner and his accomplice. He was even ingenious enough to discover the key to it, but this served no purpose. A man, who had seen a rival, or rather, a future master, in Lecoq had betrayed him.

If his efforts to arrive at the truth through the jeweler and the Marquis d'Arlange had failed, it was only because Mme. Blanche had not purchased the diamond ear-rings she wore at the Poivrière at any shop, but from one of her friends, the Baroness de Watchau.

And lastly, if no one at Paris had missed the Duc de Sairmeuse, it was because—thanks to an understanding between the duchess, Otto, and Camille—no other inmate of the Hôtel de Sairmeuse suspected his absence. All the servants supposed their master confined to his room by illness. They prepared all sorts of gruels and broths for him, and his breakfast and dinner were taken to his apartments every day.

So the weeks went by, and Martial was expecting to be summoned before the Court of Assizes and condemned under the name of May, when he was afforded an opportunity to escape.

Too shrewd not to discern the trap that had been set for him, he endured some moment of horrible hesitation in the prison-van.

He decided to accept the risk, however, commending himself to his lucky star.

And he decided wisely, for that same night he leaped his own garden-wall, leaving, as a hostage, in the hands of Lecoq, an escaped convict, Joseph Conturier by name, whom he had picked up in a low drinking-saloon.

Warned by Mme. Milner, thanks to a blunder on the part of Lecoq, Otto was awaiting his master.

In the twinkling of an eye Martial's beard fell under the razor; he plunged into the bath that was awaiting him, and his clothing was burned.

And it was he who, during the search a few minutes later, had the hardihood to call out:

"Otto, by all means allow these men to do their duty."

But he did not breathe freely until the agents of police had departed.

"At last," he exclaimed, "honour is saved! We have outwitted Lecoq!"

He had just left the bath, and enveloped himself in a *robe de chambre*, when Otto handed him a letter from the duchess.

He hastily broke the seal and read:

"You are safe. You know all. I am dying. Farewell. I loved you."

With two bounds he reached his wife's apartments. The door was locked: he burst it open. Too late!

Mme. Blanche was dead—poisoned, like Marie-Anne; but she had procured a drug whose effect was instantaneous; and extended upon her couch, clad in her wonted apparel, her hands folded upon her breast, she seemed only asleep.

A tear glittered in Martial's eye.

"Poor, unhappy woman!" he murmured; "may God forgive you as I forgive you—you whose crime has been so frightfully expiated here below!"

END OF PART SECOND

EPILOGUE

THE FIRST SUCCESS

SAFE in his own princely mansion, and surrounded by an army of retainers, the Duc de Sairmeuse triumphantly exclaimed:

"We have outwitted Lecoq."

In this he was right.

But he thought himself forever beyond the reach of the wily, keen-witted detective; and in this he was wrong.

Lecoq was not the man to sit down with folded hands and brood over the humiliation of his defeat.

Before he went to Father Tabaret, he was beginning to recover from his stupour and despondency; and when he left that experienced detective's presence, he had regained his courage, his command over his faculties, and sufficient energy to move the world, if necessary.

"Well, my good man," he remarked to Father Absinthe, who was trotting along by his side, "you have heard what the great Monsieur Tabaret said, did you not? So you see I was right."

But his companion evinced no enthusiasm.

"Yes, you were right," he responded, in woe-begone tones.

"Do you think we are ruined by two or three mistakes? Nonsense! I will soon turn our defeat of to-day into a glorious victory."

"Ah! you might do so perhaps, if—they do not dismiss us from the force."

This doleful remark recalled Lecoq to a realizing sense of the present situation.

They had allowed a prisoner to slip through their fingers. That was vexatious, it is true; but they had captured one of the most notorious of criminals—Joseph Conturier. Surely there was some comfort in that.

But while Lecoq could have borne dismissal, he could not endure the thought that he would not be allowed to follow up this affair of the Poivrière.

What would his superior officers say when he told them that May and the Duc de Sairmeuse were one and the same person?

They would, undoubtedly, shrug their shoulders and turn up their noses.

"Still, Monsieur Segmuller will believe me," he thought. "But will he dare to take any action in the matter without incontrovertible evidence?"

This was very unlikely. Lecoq realized it all too well.

"Could we not make a descent upon the Hôtel de Sairmeuse, and, on some pretext or other, compel the duke to show himself, and identify him as the prisoner May?"

He entertained this idea only for an instant, then abruptly dismissed it.

"A stupid expedient!" he exclaimed. "Are two such men as the duke and his accomplice likely to be caught napping? They are prepared for such a visit, and we should only have our labour for our pains."

He made these reflections *sotto voce;* and Father Absinthe's curiosity was roused.

"Excuse me," said he, "I did not quite understand you."

"I say that we must find some tangible proof before asking permission to proceed further."

He paused with knitted brows.

In seeking a circumstance which would establish the complicity between some member of the duke's household and the witnesses who had been called upon to give their testimony, Lecoq thought of Mme. Milner, the owner of the Hôtel de Mariembourg, and his first meeting with her.

He saw her again, standing upon a chair, her face on a level with a cage, covered with a large piece of black silk, persistently repeating three or four German words to a starling, who as persistently retorted: "Camille! Where is Camille?"

"One thing is certain," resumed Lecoq; "if Madame Milner—who is a German and who speaks with the strongest possible German accent—had raised this bird, it would either have spoken German or with the same accent as its mistress. Therefore

it cannot have been in her possession long. Now, who gave it to her?"

Father Absinthe began to grow impatient.

"In sober earnest, what are you talking about?" he asked, petulantly.

"I say that if there is some one at the Hôtel de Sairmeuse named Camille, I have the proof I desire. Come, Papa Absinthe, let us hurry on."

And without another word of explanation, he dragged his companion rapidly along.

When they reached the Rue de Grenelle, Lecoq saw a messenger leaning against the door of a wine-shop. Lecoq called him.

"Come, my boy," said he; "I wish you to go to the Hôtel de Sairmeuse and ask for Camille. Tell her that her uncle is waiting her here."

"But, sir——"

"What, you have not gone yet?"

The messenger departed; the two policemen entered the wine-shop, and Father Absinthe had scarcely had time to swallow a glass of brandy when the lad returned.

"Monsieur, I was unable to see Mademoiselle Camille. The house is closed from top to bottom. The duchess died very suddenly this morning."

"Ah! the wretch!" exclaimed the young policeman.

Then, controlling himself, he mentally added:

"He must have killed his wife on returning home, but his fate is sealed. Now, I shall be allowed to continue my investigations."

In less than twenty minutes they arrived at the Palais de Justice.

M. Segmuller did not seem to be immoderately surprised at Lecoq's revelations. Still he listened with evident doubt to the young policeman's ingenious deductions; it was the circumstance of the starling that seemed to decide him.

"Perhaps you are right, my dear Lecoq," he said, at last; "and to tell the truth, I quite agree with you. But I can take no further action in the matter until you can furnish proof so convincing in its nature that the Duc de Sairmeuse will be unable to think of denying it."

"Ah! sir, my superior officers will not allow me——"

"On the contrary," interrupted the judge, "they will allow you the fullest liberty after I have spoken to them."

Such action on the part of M. Segmuller required not a little courage. There had been so much laughter about M. Segmuller's *grand seigneur*, disguised as a clown, that many men would have sacrificed their convictions to the fear of ridicule.

"And when will you speak to them?" inquired Lecoq, timidly.

"At once."

The judge had already turned toward the door when the young policeman stopped him.

"I have one more favour to ask, Monsieur," he said, entreatingly. "You are so good; you are the first person who gave me any encouragement—who had faith in me."

"Speak, my brave fellow."

"Ah! Monsieur, will you not give me a message for Monsieur d'Escorval? Any insignificant message—inform him of the prisoner's escape. I will be the bearer of the message, and then— Oh! fear nothing, Monsieur; I will be prudent."

"Very well!" replied the judge.

When he left the office of his chief, Lecoq was fully authorized to proceed with his investigations, and in his pocket was a note for M. d'Escorval from M. Segmuller. His joy was so intense that he did not deign to notice the sneers which were bestowed upon him as he passed through the corridors. On the threshold his enemy Gevrol, the so-called general, was watching for him.

"Ah, ha!" he laughed, as Lecoq passed out, "here is one of those simpletons who fish for whales and do not catch even a gudgeon."

For an instant Lecoq was angry. He turned abruptly and looked Gevrol full in the face.

"That is better than assisting prisoners to carry on a surreptitious correspondence with people outside," he retorted, in the tone of a man who knows what he is saying.

In his surprise, Gevrol almost lost countenance, and his blush was equivalent to a confession.

But Lecoq said no more. What did it matter to him now if Gevrol had betrayed him! Was he not about to win a glorious revenge?

He spent the remainder of the day in preparing his plan of action, and in thinking what he should say when he took M. Segmuller's note to Maurice d'Escorval.

The next morning about eleven o'clock he presented himself at the house of M. d'Escorval.

"Monsieur is in his study with a young man," replied the servant; "but, as he gave me no orders to the contrary, you may go in."

Lecoq entered.

The study was unoccupied. But from the adjoining room, separated from the study only by a velvet *portière*, came a sound of stifled exclamations, and of sobs mingled with kisses.

Not knowing whether to remain or retire, the young policeman stood for a moment undecided; then he observed an open letter lying upon the carpet.

Impelled to do it by an impulse stronger than his own will, Lecoq picked up the letter. It read as follows:

"The bearer of this letter is Marie-Anne's son, Maurice—your son. I have given him all the proofs necessary to establish his identity. It was to his education that I consecrated the heritage of my poor Marie-Anne. Those to whose care I confided him have made a noble man of him. If I restore him to you, it is only because the life I lead is not a fitting life for him. Yesterday, the miserable woman who murdered my sister died from poison administered by her own hand. Poor Marie-Anne! she would have been far more terribly avenged had not an accident which happened to me, saved the Duc and the Duchess de Sairmeuse from the snare into which I had drawn them.

"JEAN LACHENEUR."

Lecoq stood as if petrified.

Now he understood the terrible drama which had been enacted in the Widow Chupin's cabin.

"I must go to Sairmeuse at once," he said to himself; "there I can discover all."

He departed without seeing M. d'Escorval. He resisted the temptation to take the letter with him.

It was exactly one month to a day after the death of Mme. Blanche.

Reclining upon a divan in his library the Duc de Sairmeuse was engaged in reading, when Otto, his *valet de chambre*, came to inform him that a messenger was below, charged with delivering into the duke's own hands a letter from M. Maurice d'Escorval.

With a bound, Martial was on his feet.

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed.

Then he added, quickly:

"Let the messenger enter."

A large man, with a very florid complexion, and red hair and beard, timidly handed the duke a letter.

Martial broke the seal, and read:

"I saved you, Monsieur, by not recognizing the prisoner, May. In your turn, aid me! By noon, day after to-morrow, I must have two hundred and sixty thousand francs.

"I have sufficient confidence in your honour to apply to you.

"MAURICE D'ESCORVAL."

For a moment Martial stood bewildered, then, springing to a table, he began writing, without noticing that the messenger was looking over his shoulder:

"MONSIEUR—Not day after to-morrow, but this evening. My fortune and my life are at your disposal. It is but a slight return for the generosity you showed in retiring, when, beneath the rags of May, you recognized your former enemy, now your devoted friend,

"MARTIAL DE SAIRMEUSE."

He folded this letter with a feverish hand, and giving it to the messenger with a louis, he said:

"Here is the answer, make haste!"

But the messenger did not go.

He slipped the letter into his pocket, then with a hasty movement he cast his red beard and wig upon the floor.

"Lecoq!" exclaimed Martial, paler than death.

"Lecoq, yes, Monsieur," replied the young detective. "I was obliged to take my revenge; my future depended upon it, and I ventured to imitate Monsieur d'Escorval's writing."

And as Martial made no response:

"I must also say to Monsieur le Duc," he continued, "that on transmitting to the judge the confession written by the Duke's own hand, of his presence at the Poivrière, I can and shall, at the same time, furnish proofs of his entire innocence."

And to show that he was ignorant of nothing, he added:

"As madame is dead, there will be nothing said in regard to what took place at the Borderie."

A week later a verdict of not guilty was rendered by M. Segmuller in the case of the Duc de Sairmeuse.

Appointed to the position he coveted, Lecoq had the good taste, or perhaps the shrewdness, to wear his honours modestly.

But on the day of his promotion, he ordered a seal, upon which was engraved the exultant rooster, which he had chosen as his armorial design, and a motto to which he ever remained faithful: *Semper Vigilans*.

THE END.

A "Gold-Digger" of the Second Century

Petala's Letter to Simalion

By ALCIPHRON

Translated by Harry Thurston Peck

WELL, if a girl could live on tears, what a wealthy girl I should be; for you are generous with *them*, anyhow! Unfortunately, however, that isn't quite enough for me. I need money; I must have jewels, clothes, servants, and all that sort of thing. Nobody has left me a fortune, I should like you to know, or any mining stock; and so I am obliged to depend on the little presents that gentlemen happen to make me.

Now that I've known you a year, how much better off am I for it, I should like to ask? My head looks like a fright because I haven't had anything to rig it out with, all that time; and as to clothes,—why, the only dress I've got in the world is in rags that make me ashamed to be seen with my friends: and yet you imagine that I can go on in this way without having any other means of living!

Oh, yes, of course, you cry; but you'll stop presently. I'm really surprized at the number of your tears; but really, unless somebody gives me something pretty soon I shall die of starvation.

Of course, you pretend you're just crazy for me, and that you can't live without me. Well, then, isn't there any family silver in your house? Hasn't your mother any jewelry that you can get hold of? Hasn't your father any valuables? Other girls are luckier than I am; for I have a mourner rather than a lover. He sends me crowns, and he sends me garlands and roses, as if I were dead and buried before my time, and he says that he cries all night. Now, if you can manage to scrape up something for me, you can come here without having to cry your eyes out; but if you can't, why, keep your tears to yourself, and don't bother me! (*Warner Library.*)

Idyll

By SAMUEL BUTLER

I KNEW a South Italian of the old Greek blood whose sister told him when he was a boy that he had eyes like a cow.

Raging with despair and grief he haunted the fountains and looked into the mirror of their waters. "Are my eyes," he asked himself with horror, "are they really like the eyes of a cow?" "Alas!" he was compelled to answer, "they are only too sadly, sadly like them."

And he asked those of his playmates whom he best knew and trusted whether it was indeed true that his eyes were like the eyes of a cow, but he got no comfort from any of them, for they one and all laughed at him and said that they were not only like, but very like. Then grief consumed his soul, and he could eat no food, till one day the loveliest girl in the place said to him:

"Gaetano, my grandmother is ill and cannot get her firewood; come with me to the bosco this evening and help me to bring her a load or two, will you?"

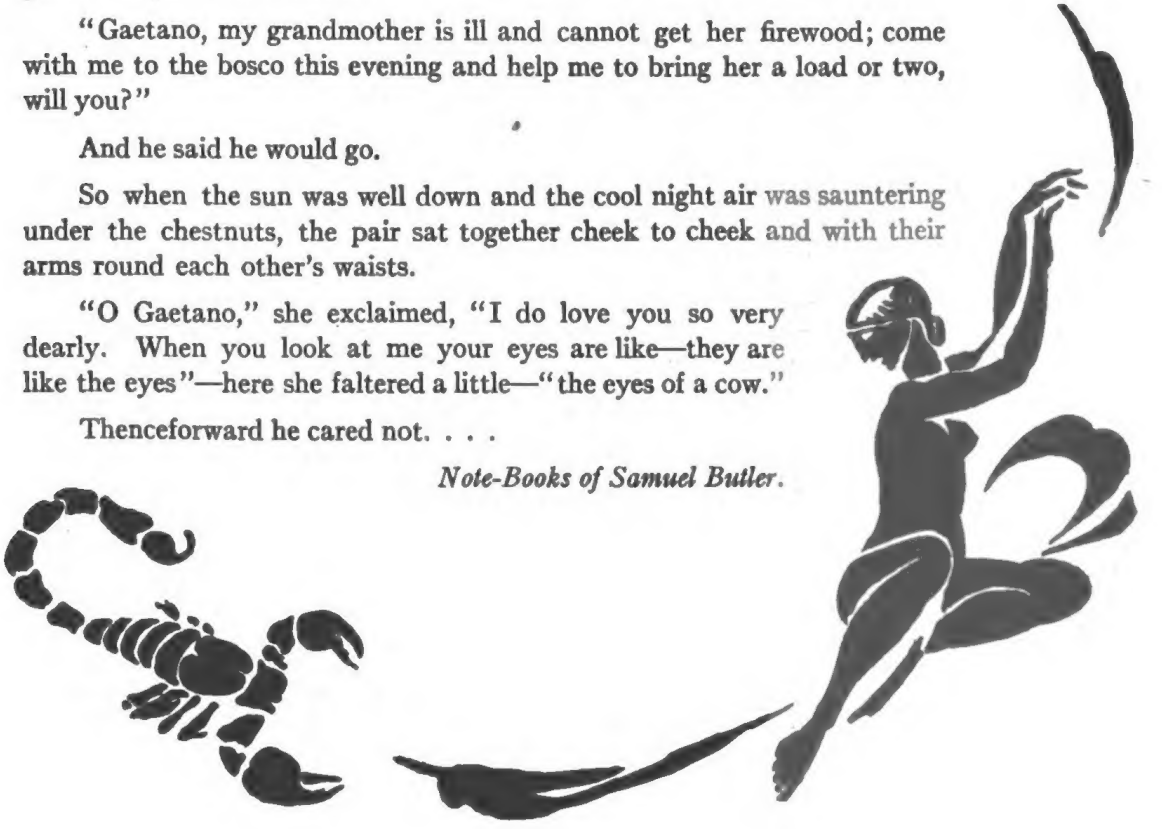
And he said he would go.

So when the sun was well down and the cool night air was sauntering under the chestnuts, the pair sat together cheek to cheek and with their arms round each other's waists.

"O Gaetano," she exclaimed, "I do love you so very dearly. When you look at me your eyes are like—they are like the eyes"—here she faltered a little—"the eyes of a cow."

Thenceforward he cared not. . . .

Note-Books of Samuel Butler.



1 The big-bodied fisherman asks me doubtingly about the comet seen these nights in the northwest—if there is any danger to be apprehended from that side. I would fain suggest that only he is dangerous to himself. THOREAU.

2 The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry of bugles going by.
BLISS CARMAN.

3 Life means for us constantly to transform into light and flame all that we are or meet with. NIETZSCHE.

4 Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,
This autumn morning. BROWNING.

5 Gaiety means impulse and vigour . . . generally speaking, it is disguised kindliness, and if it be a mere affair of temperament and mood, still it is a blessing.
AMIEL.

6 The plain country fellow is one that manures his ground well but lets himself lie fallow and untilled.
JOHN EARLE.

7 From Gorgias you Thessalians learned the habit of answering to any question whatever with an undaunted and noble confidence, such indeed as becomes those who have a thorough knowledge of the subject. SOCRATES.

8 Cool is the autumn wind,
Clear the autumn moon,
The blown leaves heap up and scatter again;
A raven, cold-stricken, starts from his roost.
Where are you, beloved?
LI PO (OBATA).

9 What a personage the wind is for sailors! . . . No enemy, no woman gives us so powerful a sensation of struggle, nor compels us to so much foresight, for it is the master of the sea, it is that thing which we may avoid, make use of, or fly from, but which we can never subdue.
DE MAUPASSANT.

10 I observed that after marriage people cease to be curious. TCHEKHOV.

11 The autumn leaves went whispering by,
Like ghosts that never slept.
RICCARDO STEPHENS.

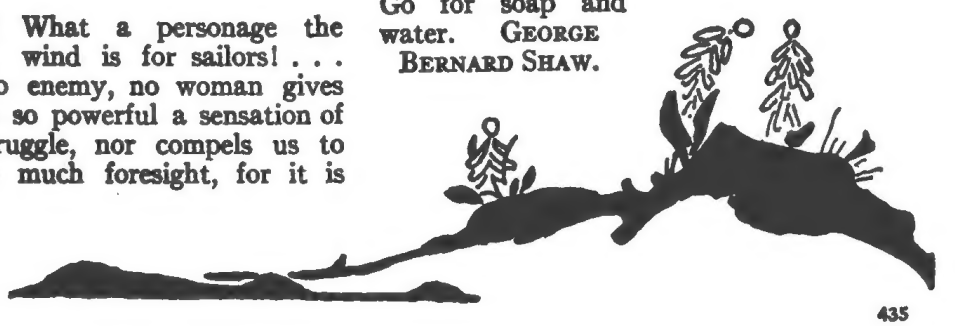
12 Another thing which caused a noise in the country, and wherein Satan had undoubtedly a great influence, was that which happened at Groton. There was a maid in that town (one Elizabeth Knap) who in the moneth of October, anno 1671, was taken after a very strange manner, sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing, sometimes roaring hideously, with violent motions and agitations of her body, crying out "Money, money," &c.
COTTON MATHER.

13 Barriers are for those who cannot fly.
MEREDITH.

14 I know that I am mortal, a creature of a day; but when I search into the multitudinous spirals of the stars, my feet no longer rest on the earth, but, standing by Zeus himself, I take my fill of ambrosia, the food of the gods. PTOLEMÆUS.

15 *1660.* And so home whence I fell to read "The Fruitless Precaution," which I read in bed till I made an end of it, and do find it the best writ tale that ever I read in my life. After that done to sleep, which I did not very well do because that my wife . . . snored much, which I did never hear her do before. PEPYS.

16 If a man holds up a mirror to your nature and shows you that it needs washing—not whitewashing—it is no use breaking the mirror.
Go for soap and water. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.



17 Nothing is more useless than those heroic friendships which require exceptional circumstances to prove them. The great difficulty is to find some one who does not rack your nerves in every one of the various ordinary occurrences of life.

FLAUBERT.

18 For earth and sky and air
Are golden everywhere,
And golden with a gold so suave and fine
The looking on it lifts the heart with wine.

HENLEY.

19 We have all seen mornings when, lacking salt mackerel, we would have starved to death. Salt mackerel sits upon a stormy stomach like a petrel on the bosom of the foaming wave.

SIMEON FORD.

20 Not knowing when the dawn will come,
I open every door;
Or has it feathers like a bird,
Or billows like a shore?

EMILY DICKINSON.

21 Item, as for Mistress Katherine Dudley, I have many times recommended you to her, and she is nothing displeased with it, she rekkythe not how many gentlemen love her, she is full of love.

Paston Letters (*about 1470*).

22 Short days, sharp days, long nights come on apace;
Ah, who shall hide us from the winter's face?

THOMAS NASHE.

23 The first autumn I passed in America, I was surprized to find a great and very oppressive return of heat, accompanied with a heavy mistiness in the air, long after the summer heats were over—the "Indian Summer." The cause of this heat is the slow combustion of the leaves and other vegetable matter of the boundless and indeterminable forests.

MRS. TROLLOPE.

24 Thence to see the pictures on the wall over the altar of All Souls, being the largest piece of fresco painting . . . in England, not ill designed by the hand of one Fuller; yet I fear it will not hold long. It seems too full of nakeds for a chapel.

EVELYN.

25 Before across the silent lawn
In sea-green mist the morning steals
And to love's frightened eyes reveals
The long white fingers of the dawn.

WILDE.

26 "She's the sort of woman, now, one would almost feel disposed to bury for nothing, and do it neatly too!"

DICKENS.

27 Let autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end.

KEATS.

28 Love of flattery, in most men, proceeds from the mean opinion they have of themselves; in women, from the contrary.

SWIFT.

29 Can the year, when his heart is fulfilled with desire of the days of his mirth,
Redeem them, recall, or remember?

SWINBURNE.

30 Woman: an enigma which perhaps is no enigma except for those who seek some meaning in it.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

31 Great nature through her spaces vast
Casts her keen javelins of the frost.

CELIA THAXTER.